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COVER STORY

MEAN MACHINES EXCLUSIVE

RISE OF THE ROBOTS



This one-on-one combat game from Mirage, with it's spectacular use of rendered graphics, is rumoured to be the start of a revolution in video gaming. Now, at last, it's coming to the Sega systems. MEAN MACHINES as usual, looks beyond the hype and gives you an exclusive look at the game which could even change the fortunes of the Mega-CD.



CON

FEATURES



REVIEWS

MEGADRIVE



▲ *Watch out — beetle's about in Subterranea.*

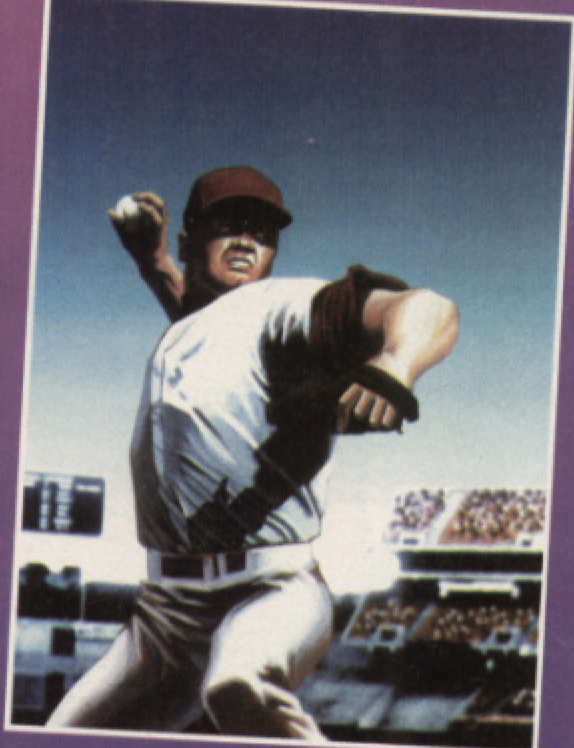
TENTS

GAME GEAR

MASTER SYSTEM

MEGA-CD

PREVIEWS



▲ *You wouldn't to play baseball with the characters from RBI '94 in a narrow alley on a dark night.*

REGULARS

EDITO

WHODUNNIT

EDITOR
STEVE 'Me Old Mucker' MERRETT
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
LUCY 'Cheers' HICKMAN
ART EDITOR
OSMOND 'H-Core' BROWNE
PRODUCTION EDITOR
GUS 'Quite Ironic' SWAN
DESIGNER
CLAIRE 'Have You...' COULTHARD
CONTRIBUTORS
PAUL 'Loquacious' DAVIES
GROUP AD MANAGER
MELANIE 'Deeply Dieppe-y' ROBERTS
DEPUTY AD MANAGER
MARIE 'A Favour' LAWLOR
PRODUCT MANAGER
NICOLA 'Still Available' BENTLEY
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
VICKY 'I' JACOBS
PUBLISHER
MARC 'A Word' SWALLOW
SPECIAL THANKS TO: George at ICE Distribution (0302 340079). Good prices and always there with a smile. We can't actually be sure of that but it sounds good. While I'm here, similar thanks go to Kaiser and Raymond at Funhouse (0223 212192). Cheers, me old muckers.

EDITORIAL CREVICE: Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.
PHONE: 071 972 6700
FAX: 071 972 6701
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COMPETITION RULES
Basically, right, nobody at EMAP or the company involved can win. Neither can their Mums or any other relatives. Not even mates. In fact, since Steve spotted that loophole last month, pets can't either. The thing is, if you believe in that story that everybody is related to everybody, then basically no-one can enter. Ah well, give it a go anyway.

GREAT UNANSWERED QUESTIONS OF OUR TIME: No 1
Whenever an old person appears on TV, why do they always go on about their age? Have you ever watched something like Barrymore? 'So how old are you then?' Mike will ask. After a bit of wheezing to show how amazing it is that they can ride a unicycle/swim two miles they'll reply 'I'm 92 (or whatever) you know', before reminding us every five minutes. I mean, these people are someone's grandparents. It's them I feel sorry for...



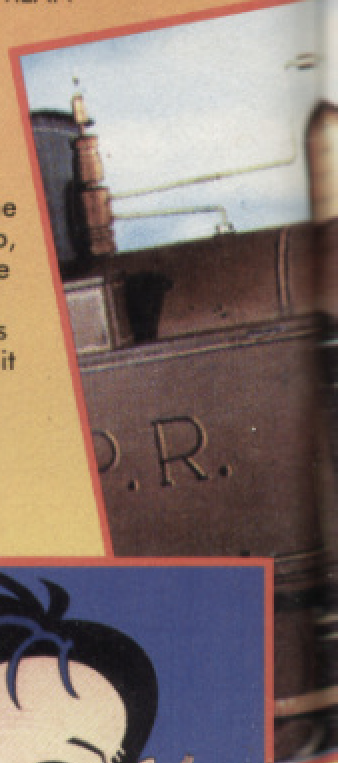
STEVE

Oh deary, deary me. It seems like the software industry has gone into temporary hibernation, taking all the long-awaited games with it. Marko's Magic Football, SoulStar and Tennis all-Stars have all disappeared with their respective companies for a short break, leaving a bit of a drought as far as quality software goes — although thank heavens for the simply stunning Virtua Racing and Sub-Terrania. Thankfully, we've managed to use our charm and manners to wheedle first looks at some of the best new stuff on the way, and this should make up for a bit of a crap month in terms of actual releases. It's obvious that the current lack of decent stuff to review is just a hiccup, but you can find solace in our expanded preview section. Sega's Soleil is simply stunning, Jimmy White's Snooker shows that the Megadrive can handle polygons even without the SVP used with Virtua. What's more, footy fans can also look forward to the rather promising Ryan Giggs licence from Acclaim.
There's great stuff around the corner, and, as ever, MEAN MACHINES SEGA will have it first — we're not Britain's best-selling video games mag for nothing, you know!

CARD-IAC ARREST

We get a lot of compo entries and letters here at MEAN MACHINES SEGA. Normally, we receive hundreds of those dull plain white ones with the answers scrawled on the back. Every now and then, though, we get a series of postcards so... well, awful that they have to be seen to be believed. Granted, we get a few nice ones, too, but overall they're pretty dire. But can you beat the rather terrible ones we have on display here? If so, we want to see it, and we're offering prizes for the worst postcards we receive. So if you've been on holiday and found one so tasteless, it makes Chris Evans look like a Jean-Paul Gaultier model, send it to us at:

WISH YOU WERE HERE,
MEAN MACHINES SEGA,
Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London,
EC1R 3AU





▲Kevin Palmer, from John Murphy from Portree. My, what a handsome chap: still, at least he's only on the radio!



▲Judy Garland, from Warren Fairclough from Doncaster. Apparently, the dead can't sue. It's a good job, really...

THE MEAN MACHINES SEGA WINTER OLYMPICS

At the very start of this very issue of MEAN MACHINES SEGA, work was disrupted by the arrival of several inches of snow. Of course, being the investigative journalists we are, we felt we had to compare snow games against the current Megadrive range. Here are our findings:



Gus at the heart of a freak blizzard

Sliding: The snow equivalent of Sonic, this one. Simply leg it down Farringdon Lane outside the office and part your legs slightly to achiever perfect balance as you slide along the road. Hazards come in the form of cars, tube station entrances, and old ladies. 93%
Snowballs: A bit of a a timeless Space Invaders classic. You know the rules, but several new options have now been added. For instance, once everyone is knackered out, one wag can always say 'that's enough now.' As everyone agrees and walks back, said wag can then launch a real slushy mess at the back of the nearest person's head. Hours of fun. 95%



Claire looking silly in a white hat.

RIAL



▲Basil Brush, from Rachel Scott, Perthshire. At last we find out what halted Basil's promising career — a 200mph train!

Glendalough, from David Walsh from Stillogan. Yes, come visit the sunny cemetery and dig up a few mates. My, what good taste. ▶





'Gerrim!' roars Claire in a most un-ladylike fashion, and stuffs Oz.

Falling Over: Gus's speciality. Laden down with breakfast bagels, a newspaper and cans of Irn Bru, simply walk down the road until your heel skids and you fall on your backside. Not much fun on your own, but better with a crowd. 92%
Snow Shapes: Another gold for Gus. Fall backwards in true comedy style, and create a symmetrical pattern by moving your arms up and down. Then stand up to look at what shape you've made, whilst everyone laughs at the frozen dog crap and leaves stuck to the back of your coat. 55%
Writing Names: You need yellow snow for this one, just—SNIP. Actually, that's enough snow events for now...

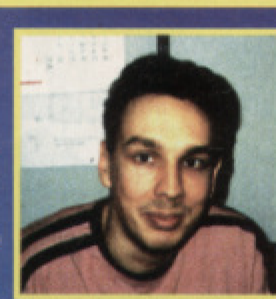


Steve has to play with himself.

THE TEAM

When we're not out socialising with our many celebrity mates, there's nothing the MEAN MACHINES crew like more than slobbing out in front of the old goggle box. But what's essential viewing for our square-eyed team?

STEVE 'Time Warp' MERRETT



Pulling his long scarf around him and leaping into a blue Police Box, Steve admits that his favourite TV prog is Doctor Who. Why the fixation with a programme currently no longer on our screens? 'Well, my girlfriend heard me saying "I'll see you later, Dalek", when I was on the phone. 'Well, something like that anyway...', he said as he dematerialised.

LUCY 'Woman From Auntie' HICKMAN



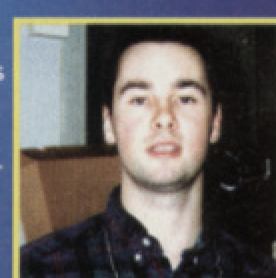
Ooh, ooh, bit of politics. Ben Elton tackles our Luce's fancy. 'I-think-he's-really-funny, and-love-his-fast-paced-delivery,and-the-clever-way-he-pokes-fun-at-the-establishment. My-name's-Lucy-Hickman,thank-you-and-good-night.' Needless to say, our Lucy wows us all with her fantastic dress sense and nice line in spangly suits.

OZ 'Al' BROWNE



'Quantum Leap does it for me,' says our would-be Sam Beckett Art Ed. 'I love the way the hero jumps from body to body, doing loads of good turns.' Sadly, Oz's attempts to mimic Sam's on-screen good deeds have resulted in two stunned old ladies he tried to help cross the road. One even had a stroke — but only because Oz let her...

ANGUS 'Eagles' SWAN



ITV's classic sci-fi series, Space 1999, rates highly with oor Gus. 'It was brilliant,' he comments. 'All those flashing console lights, and walkie-talkies which were identical to today's portable phones — talk about way ahead of its time.' Since confessing to this, Gus has since been seen wandering around in what appears to be a blue and white romper suit, doing his best Martin Landau impression. But since nobody remembers Mr Landau, we can't actually gauge how close it is.

CLAIRE 'Kiddy' COULTHARD



Claire shows her age a little with her favourite TV prog. 'It's Mary, Mungo and Midge,' she simpers. 'I don't know why I like it so much, I just do.' For those of you too young to remember this children's fave of the 70s, Mary was a girl, Mungo a dog, and Midge was a mouse. They all lived together in a high-rise London flat , and got into terrible scrapes. Every week a visit to the shops end in chaos, or a visit from the postman result in a tragedy. The dog would chide the mouse, and Mary would be patronising. They ran a good scam with Mungo signing on at the DSS for benefits in Midge's name, and their Social Worker often popped round with free foreign holidays. We can see what Claire sees in it now. (Actually the benefit/Social Worker bit is a lie).


THINK YOU CAN
Cole, Cantona Papin? So you know your goal scorers. Matthaus, Guillit, Platt, and your midfield maestro's.
But did you know that Dixons stock the premier football games?
FIFA Soccer , Ultimate Soccer, Super Kick Off. The boys done good? But the boys done even better if your bag is golf, motor racing, ice hockey, American football, athletics, or skiing.
In fact Dixons has more choice for sports games than any other store.
...THEN YOU'LL BE OVER THE MOON
* We will refund the difference on the spot if you can find the same product with the same offer, cheaper locally. Just come back to us within 7 days of purchase, with the details. The product must be new, complete and available for immediate delivery. This guarantee excludes mail order prices/offers.
EA SPORTS
MEGA DRIVE
NBA JAM
F1
WINTER CHALLENGE

THRASH THIS TEAM?



Our boys will also do you proud when it comes to value for money.
With more stores in more towns we always get the best deals on Sega games.
And with our price promise, if you can get a game cheaper, we'll refund the difference*.
So, as they say in this funny old game: if you don't pop along to Dixons for your sports games, you're likely to be as sick as a parrot

AT Dixons



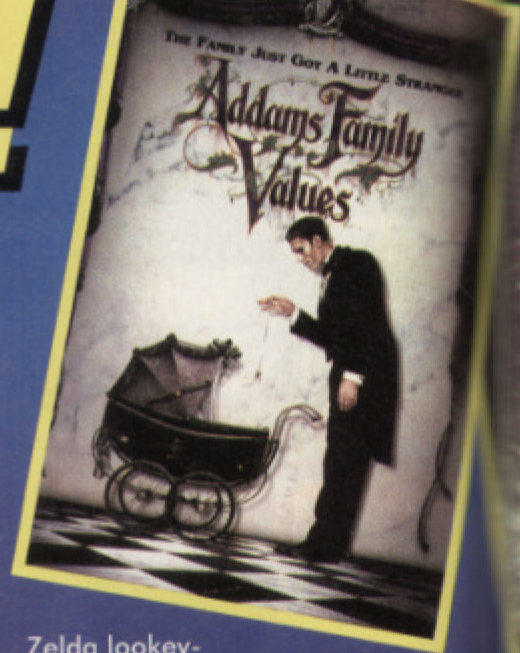
NEWS

SONY GO TO THE MOVIES!

- NEW GAME
- SONY
- MEGADRIVE

Sony have beaten the likes of Acclaim to snap up the rights to one of this year's biggest film licences — The Flintstones. The summer blockbuster for 1994 looks set to be Spielberg's update of the Hanna-Barbera cartoon, with Roseanne co-star, John Goodman stepping into the furry shoes of Fred. In addition Goodman is ably assisted by Rick Moranis as Barney and Elizabeth Taylor as Wilma's mother, Zelda. The pre-release hype in the States is billing this as 'the movie of the year', and it was only a matter of time before some wise soft co snapped up the rights to produce a Megadrive game based on the film. Sony were first past the post with their cheque book and pen.

The licence is a result of Sony's new distribution deal with Ocean, and will probably result in any Megadrive conversions of newly-signed Ocean games coming through Sony. Ocean's



Zelda lookey-likey, Addams Family Values, is already part of the deal, and a Megadrive version should hit our shelves by November. The Super NES game looks to be extremely promising, and takes an original slant on the licence

STOP PRESS: SEGA UNVEILED MARS

- HARDWARE
- BY SEGA
- MARS

Just as we were putting this issue of MEAN MACHINES to bed, news filtered through regarding a new machine from Sega. Called the Mars, the machine is basically a mini-Saturn, and plugs into the Megadrive (like the Power Base), allowing the user to play 32-bit games! The first games to be released alongside the machine in November are Virtua Fighter and Virtua Racing Deluxe. The unit won't be able to run CD-based Saturn games, but we can reveal it will cost £150. This is a real shot in the arm for the Megadrive, so stay tuned for more a full tech spec and more news in next month's MEAN MACHINES.





THE



theme — ie. there's not a platform in sight — and follows the adventures of Fester as he meanders across a massive scrolling landscape in search of potions and In addition, Ocean have also recently announced they have secured the licence to Spielberg's sequel to Jurassic Park — a film only just entering pre-production stage, and a massive coup for Sony if this is part of the deal.

We'll have full previews on each of the games as and when they appear.

MEGADRIVE ELITE!

- NEW GAME
- BY SONY
- MEGADRIVE



The word classic is bandied about a little too often for our liking. However, one game which rightfully has a claim to the title is David Braben's classic sci-fi trading epic, Elite. Well, after years of waiting, someone has done the right thing and snapped it up for the Megadrive — Sony, no less! The ink is quite literally wet on the contract, so there's no new of who will be developing the game or what improvements they aim to make, but rest assured MEAN MACHINES SEGA will be taking an exclusive peek at the 'Game Of A Lifetime' as soon as there's something to see.

GATE OUT OF HERE!

- NEW GAME
- BY ACCLAIM
- MEGADRIVE

Acclaim's cheque book suffers another bashing, as they leap in for another of this year's big movies: Stargate.Set some time in the future, Kurt Russell is a military chief ordered to investigate a hole in time — the stargate of the title — found by a group of archaeologists working in Egypt. However, the team stumble too close to the pulsating hole and find themselves in a world governed by a an evil dictator. As with True Lies, Acclaim have only just turned their attention to the licence, with game and film due to hir in November/ December.



ACCLAIM GET ARNIE AGAIN

- NEW GAME
- BY ACCLAIM
- MEGADRIVE

With the disappointing Last Action Hero well and truly behind him, Mr Schwarzenegger (Sir) once again teams up with James Cameron for another bash at the action/comedy scene this Christmas. True Lies is the name of the film, and Acclaim have snatched the licence and are currently preparing a game storyboard. The film sees Arnie as a freelance expert currently working with an anti-nuclear task force — something his family know nothing about! As can be expected, the film is set to feature a number of showcase action scenes between the funny bits, and Acclaim are confident that it'll make a bit of a smart game. They my be right, but we're not likely to see anything until much later this year.



SUPER STREET FIGHTER COMP:

THE WINNER!

How many of you have been sitting at home waiting to hear who won the fantastic Super Street Fighter machine in our Chrimbo compo? Well, wait no longer as we can now unveil the winner. It is (gasp) JAMES RILEY, who hails from THAMESMEAD! So, James, expect to see a van containing your coin-op very soon — we suggest you start clearing out a corner of your room...





COCK-A-HOOP! WIN NBA GOODIES!

- COMPETITION
- BY FOX VIDEO

Basketball fever has sent Acclaim's NBA Jam straight to the top of the charts, and fans of the sport can relive some of its greatest moments courtesy of a new video from Fox.NBA Jam Session features music from the likes of Bell, Biv, Devoe, Heavy D and... er, Patti Labelle, and accompanies some of the best shots and attacks from the last few years. Charles Barkley, Shaq O'Neill and Larry Bird are among the players on view, but you can get better acquainted by wining a copy of the video in our rather smart compo! We've got six copies to give away as first prizes, whilst the next six pulled out Lucy's balaclava will get soundtrack CDs. What's more, six runners-up will find a CD copy of Shaq's 'I'm Outstanding' single on its way to them. To win one of these prizes, just answer the following question:

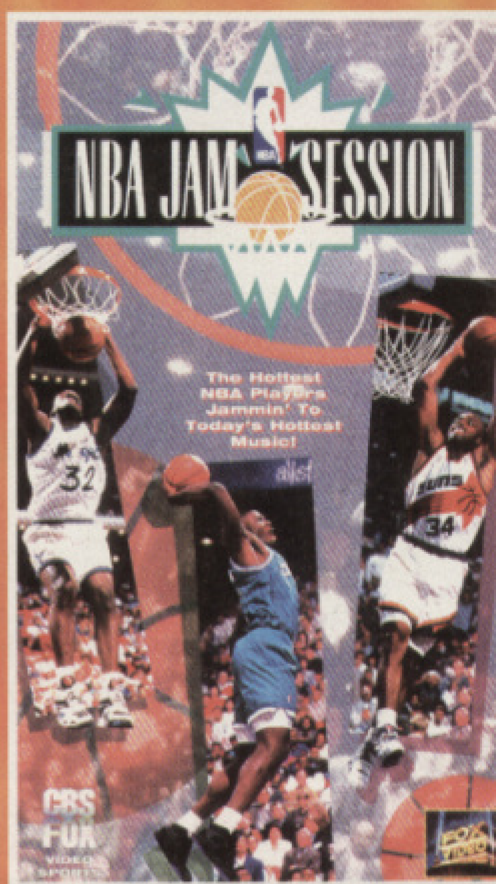
How tall do you have to be to play professional Basketball?

A. Fairly tall
B. Ronnie Corbett size
C. Bloody huge, with long legs and arms

Send your entries to:

HOOP, HOOP, HOORAY COMP,
MEAN MACHINES SEGA,
Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London
EC1R 3AU

All entries must be in by April 1st, and multiple entries will be force-fed to their senders. Oh, and usual compo rules apply.



DRAKE, WE ARE LEAVING...

- NEW GAME
- BY ACCLAIM
- MEGA-CD

On its way to a Mega-CD near you is a collection of games based on the Alien trilogy of films. The project has been licensed by Acclaim, and we believe that the main bulk of the game will be made up of Probe's unofficial Alien War 3-D blaster. However, Acclaim have yet to announce the programming team, so three entirely new games may be written. It's very early days, but MEAN MACHINES is a real fan of those acid-blooded bugs, and will follow any developments extremely closely.



SPORT ACCOLADE

ACCOLADE GOODIES UP FOR GRABS

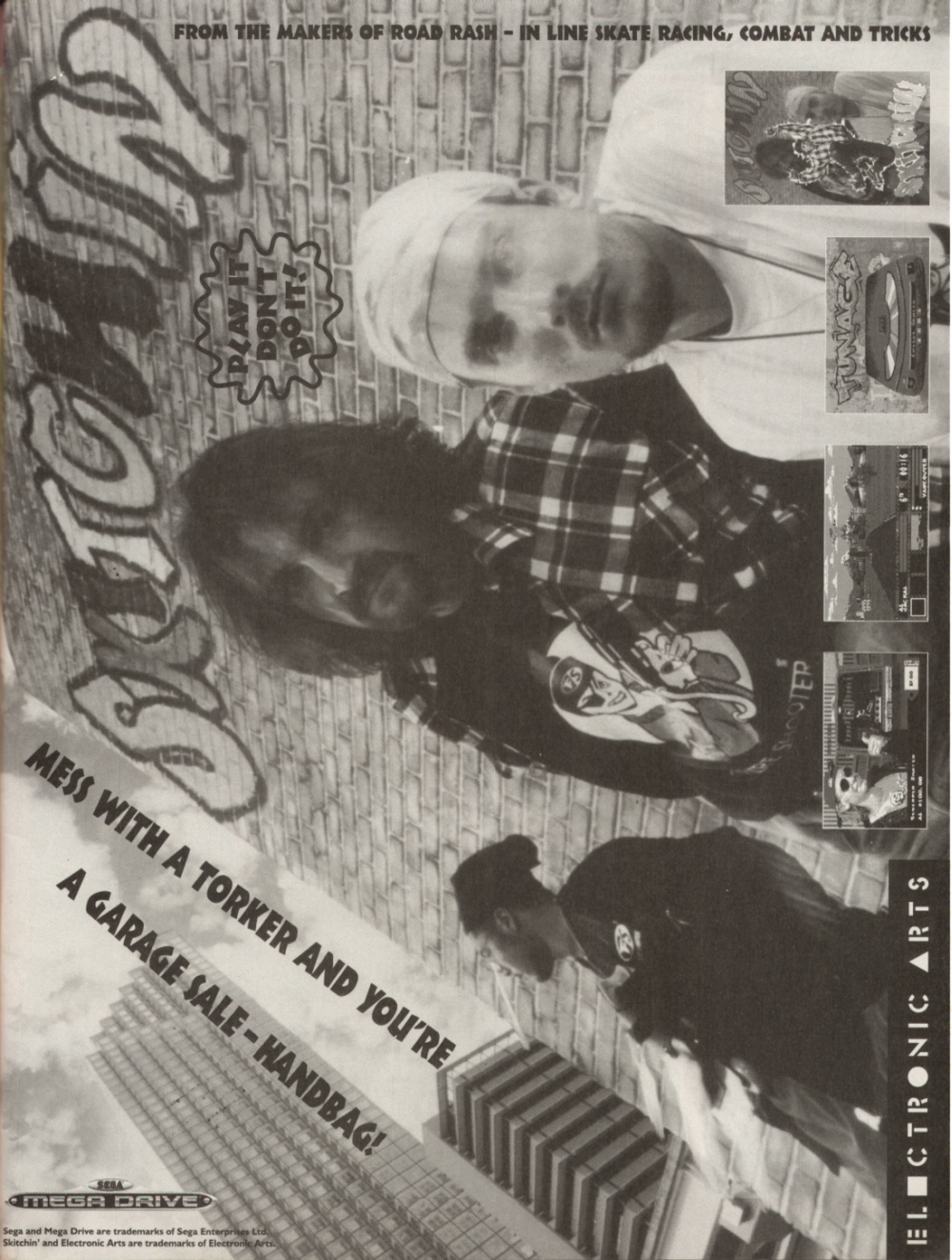
- COMPETITION
- BY ACCOLADE

With the launch of their Sport Accolade label, which, funnily enough, is a label just for sports games such as Charles Barkley: Shut Up and Jam, Accolade are feeling a touch generous so they've very kindly dug into their coffers and come up with a bundle of sports-related prizes especially for you. One lucky perp can bag themselves a whole host of goodies including a luxury Sport Accolade baseball jacket, concocted from the finest materials, which will even make the tea (providing you put your mum in it first). There's a loverly sports bag up for grabs into which you can bundle your wet swimming kit and it's guaranteed not to make them go mouldy for at least an hour! The winner and some carefully selected runners-up also get a limited edition Sport Accolade pin badge, a super-cool suede peaked baseball cap and a Shut Up and Jam! T-shirt. Hurrah!

All you have to do to be in the running for a prize is answer the following questions:

1. What bank has a name similar to Charles Barkley's?
2. What shape is a basketball?
3. What is your mum's name?

Jot your answers down onto a postcard together with your name and address and send it in to: A BASKETBALL IS SPHERICAL COMPO, MEAN MACHINES, Priory Court 30 - 32 Farringdon Lane LONDON EC1R 3AU. Entries in by MAY 20 or Lucy gets it! And there's no point getting all mardy if you don't win cos the Editor's decision is final (just as long as the making of it doesn't interrupt his basket-weaving, that is).


FROM THE MAKERS OF ROAD RASH - IN LINE SKATE RACING, COMBAT AND TRICKS
PLAY IT DON'T DO IT!
MESS WITH A TORKER AND YOU'RE A GARAGE SALE - HANDBAG!
ELECTRONIC ARTS
SEGA MEGA DRIVE
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Skitchin' and Electronic Arts are trademarks of Electronic Arts.

GOLDEN JOYSTICKS 1994

It's that time of year again, where you all get to vote for what you feel were the best games of the last year — yes, it's time for the EMAP Golden Joystick Awards, where all the software houses gather together to pat each other on the back, as the vie for the much-coveted Golden Joysticks. The reason the Joysticks are so special is because, it's the readers of EMAP magazines who vote — and it's you who buys the games in the first place. So, if you want to see FIFA win all sorts of awards for Sega, or reckon that Virgin are the best, now's your chance. Listed below are the assorted categories and a series of examples. The only rules are that any games you vote for must have been released between 1st January 1993 and 31st December 1993 this year. Here's the categories:

1. BEST CONSOLE SIMULATION (FIFA, Sensible Soccer, Thunderhawk, F1)

2. BEST LICENSED CONSOLE GAME (FIFA, Mortal Kombat, Street Fighter II, Gauntlet IV, Aladdin)

3. BEST ORIGINAL CONSOLE GAME (Flashback, Mega-lo-Mania, Zombies,)

4. CONSOLE GAME OF THE YEAR (Street Fighter II, FIFA, Jungle Strike)

5. HANDHELD GAME OF THE YEAR (Desert Strike, Mickey Mouse 2, Defenders Of Oasis)

6. SOFTWARE HOUSE OF THE YEAR (Virgin, Acclaim, Sega, Konami,)

7. BEST AD OF THE YEAR (Mortal Kombat, Sega Pirate TV,)

8. BEST ORIGINAL CONSOLE ACTION GAME (Gunstar Heroes, Eternal Champions, Jungle Strike,)

9. CONSOLE PROGRAMMER OF THE YEAR

IMPORTANT! Don't feel you have to vote for the games listed beneath the categories, these are just examples — after all, you may reckon Terminator 2 deserves an award (unlikely, I know). Also, please ensure your entries reach us by May 3rd.

SUPER STREET FIGHTER TURBO! -

- NEW GAME
- BY CAPCOM
- COIN-OP



▼All new attacks...not much else 'nouveau', though.

With the world and his wife still awaiting some sort of news on Street Fighter III, Capcom have tweaked their recently-released Super Street Fighter machine to bring arcade-goers Super Street Fighter Turbo! The existing sixteen characters are all back for more scrapping action, but each has been given a few more moves to make things interesting — Ken can now grab people by the head and knee them in the knackers, for instance!

The main addition to the game, though, are the new 'Super Attacks'. Shown at the bottom of the screen is a small bar which fills up whenever a special move is effected. As soon as it's full, though, and another special move is made, the screen whites out as an ultra-powerful move is pulled off! This means that Ken's Dragon Punch is even more deadly, and Sagat can effect a Tiger Uppercut which connects no less than five times! Let's just hope the new additions appear in Capcom's forthcoming conversion...

GET STUCK IN

- STICKERS
- BY PANINI

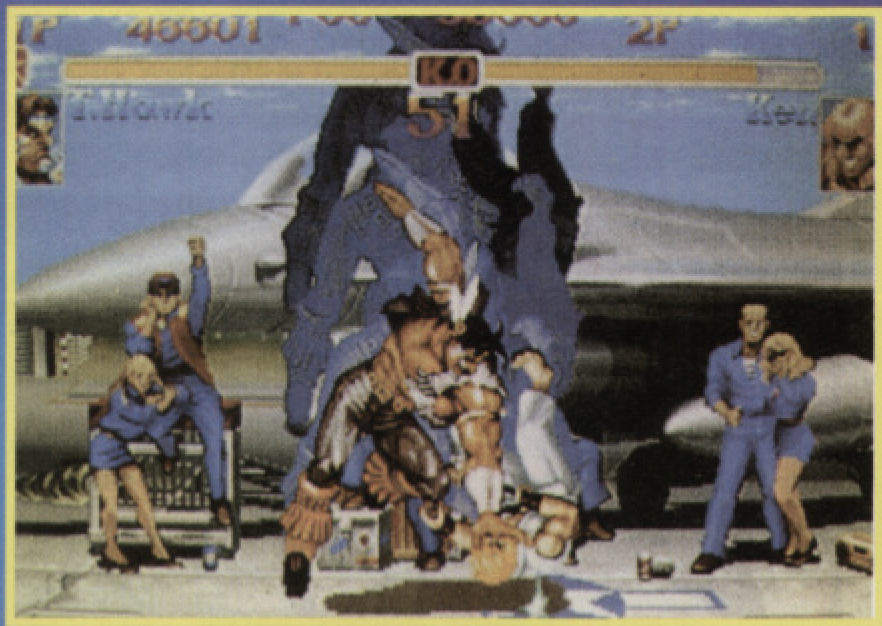


Unless some rotten sod has pinched yours, you've probably already had a gander at the rather smart Panini Eternal Champions stickers affixed to this very mag. Available at all good newsagents now (and several crap ones, too, we expect), there are 240 stickers to collect showing the game and all its characters, and each packet costs 20p — and the rather snazzy album to put them in costs a reasonable 50p. Not bad, eh?

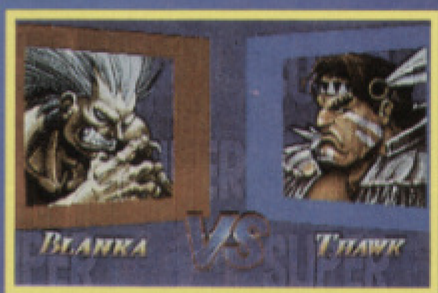
MARIO ON MEGADRIVE SHOCK!

- NEW GAME
- BY EA
- MEGADRIVE

So can it be true? Are Sega willing to risk the mighty wrath (and no doubt the phenomenal court costs) of the formidable Nintendo by bringing their most famous character onto the Sega systems?! Well, no, actually. However, EA are immortalising former Formula One champ Mario Andretti onto Sega with a shiny new Megadrive game — Mario Andretti Racing.







MAX PACKS

- NEW GAME
- BY SONY
- MEGADRIVE

Just a quickie, Sony are all set to unleash a new Megadrive hero on to the market. Mighty Max is the star and name of their new puzzler, but that's all we know. However, veteran Spectrum coder, Jon Ritman, recently unleashed a similarly-monickered game for the Game Boy through Titus — coincidence or just wishful thinking on our part. We know there's not a lo to say, but, hey, we thought you ought to know.

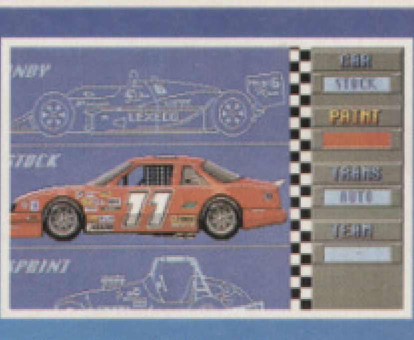


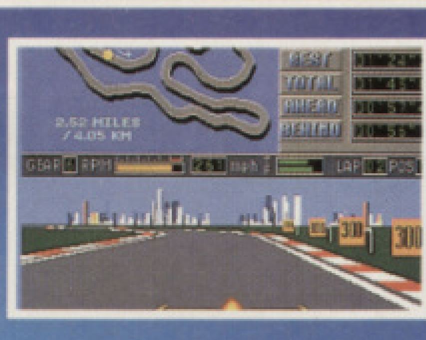


THOR THUMB

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- MEGADRIVE

Norse legends and the infamous battle of Ragnarok form the basis for Sega's latest arcade/adventure. Entitled The Story of Thor, the player controls the titular god as he prepares for the ultimate battle of the deities. For those of you unfamiliar with the story of Ragnarok, it is a mystical place where all the Norse gods met for a final battle — and which resulted in them all getting killed off! Using a bird's-eye-view, Story Of Thor mixes hack and slay action with several RPG elements and a bit of magic thrown in for good measure. Thor's at a very early stage of development at the mo, but a full preview is on its way.







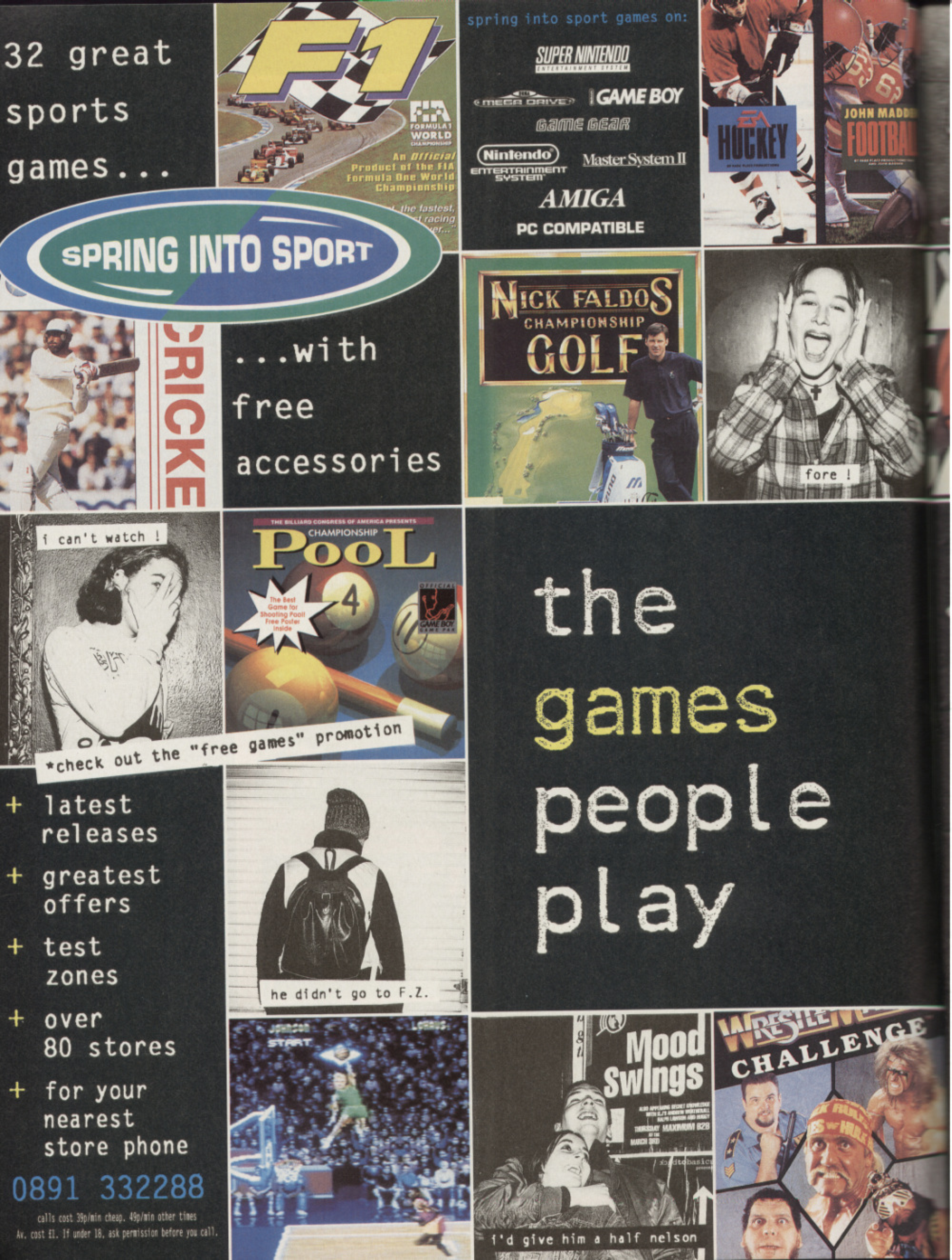
▲ *Mario! Mario! Mario!*

The ex-world champ turned Indy Car Racing hero will be put through his paces in three different types of racing including the slippery, slidey mud tracks of the Sprint Cars; the break-neck speed of the Stock Car ovals and pure power and manoeuvrability of the Indy Car circuit.
There are 15 different tracks to conquer, all modelled on the real thing using real topographical data (sounds impressive. Probably). There's split screen two-player action for people with friends and heaps of options for unpopular saddies including full-screen mode or split screen showing either a course map, rear view or third person perspective. Go for exhibition, single circuit or a full blown career or get some practice in at the Mario training centre where the great man actually speaks instructions. Out in June, we'll bring you a Mario update just as soon as we can.

YOU DON'T SAY...

More grapevine shenanigans and rumours galore...

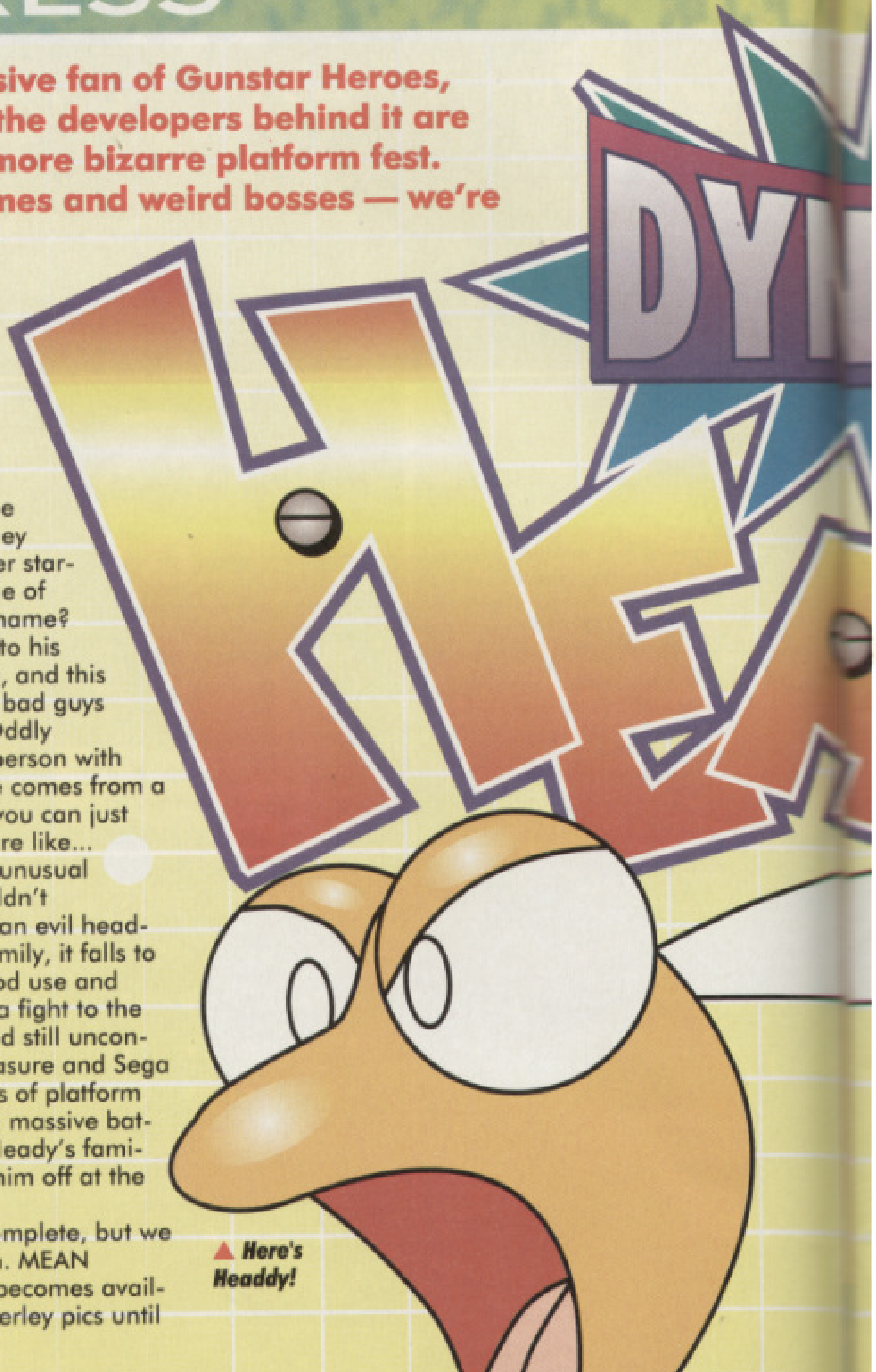
*Let's start the month with those busy chaps at **EA**, shall we? Well, it may interest you to learn that the Slough-based wonders have signed up the rights to produce a Shaq O'Neill game. However, for those of you expecting yet another Basketball game to go with the other hundred can breathe a sigh of relief, as Shaq himself is supervising the programming of a Streets Of Rage-style beat 'em! Speaking of **Sega's** beat 'em up, apparently Streets Of Rage 4 has just been started. No firm details just yet, though...*
*On the **Virgin** front, they've just secured the Sensi boys to follow-up the forthcoming Cannon Fodder with Sensi Golf! The Amiga version is the first on its way, but we're told a Megadrive version will be hot on its heels — although quite what they're going to do with it is beyond us. Meanwhile, up in Liverpool with the **Psygnosis** clan, we hear a whisper that they've secured the rights to the Megadrive version of Dropzone and plan to give it the full works. Archer Maclean is rather busy on Snooker for **Virgin**, though, so it's doubtful he'll be handling the coding chores.*
*Remember we told you about **Core's** Game Gear platformer, Trunkski, last issue? Well, forget it because it has been scrapped. However, **Core** are intensifying their Mega-CD development with the announcement that Heimdall II will be appearing early next year. And speaking of cancelled games (well, we were a few lines back), we hear that **Sega's** Game Gear racer, Sonic Drift, has also bought the big one — it still has to be confirmed, though.*
*Mega-CD owners who want to be Top Gun should keep an eye out for **Domark's** AC8B Harrier Assault which is set to touch down late this year. Apparently, it's going to rival Thunderhawk in terms of playability and what the CD system can do. We'll reserve judgment. Meanwhile, **Domark's** Putney HQ has also taken delivery of a game called Cyberpunks. No details on it yet, though...*
K



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he didn't go to F.Z.
Mood Swings
WRESTLEMANIA
CHALLENGE
i'd give him a half nelson

WORK IN PROGRESS

If, like us, you were a massive fan of Gunstar Heroes, you'll be pleased to know the developers behind it are busy working on an even more bizarre platform fest. Forget dice-based sub-games and weird bosses — we're in head-banging territory. Literally! STEVE MERRETT would forget his head if it wasn't screwed on, so we sent him to investigate...



▲ *Here's Headdy!*

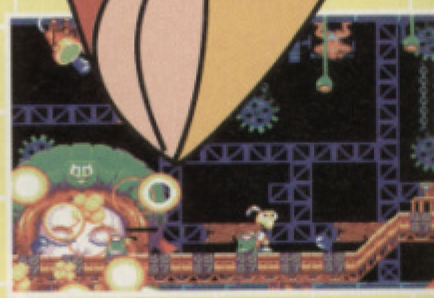
After several months of hibernation, Treasure — those clever guys behind Gunstar Heroes — are preparing for the best comeback since Gary Glitter, as they unveil a rather smart-looking platformer starring a semtex-scalped hero by the name of Dynamite Heady. Why such a strange name? Well, young Dyna's head is connected to his puny body by a spring-mounted device, and this allows him to propel his noggin at any bad guys foolish enough to stray into his path. Oddly enough, though, Heady isn't the only person with this unique bonce-bouncing skill, as he comes from a family of similarly-skilled folks — and you can just imagine what their Christmas parties are like...

It has to be said, though, that such an unusual skill as Heady and his kin possess wouldn't prove that useful that often, but when an evil head-shrinking cat kidnaps the rest of the family, it falls to Heady to put his projectile head to good use and engage the feline foe's many allies in a fight to the death. Thus, with this rather odd — and still unconfirmed — scenario out of the way, Treasure and Sega invite you to traverse seven huge levels of platform japery, with the game culminating in a massive battle against the rotten moggy holding Heady's family. But if you're quick, you can 'head' him off at the pass (groan).

So far, the game is roughly 50-60% complete, but we reckon this is going to be one to watch. MEAN MACHINES will have more news as it becomes available, but feast your eyes on these luvverley pics until then...







▲ *Mamma! Mamma! Arrgggh! Schlop.*



▲ *Still in that early stage of development.*

EXIT STAGE RIGHT

Heady's quest for a family reunion spans seven large stages, which contains all manner of weird foes out to stop him. Tank patrols, large Rottweilers and enough dangerous toys to give Lynne Faulds-Woods a heart attack, are all vying for a taste of Heady's forehead, and contact with them reduces our hero's energy until he finally gives up the ghost. In addition, awaiting Heady at the end of each stage is a particularly nasty boss. Granted, this may not sound stunningly original, but Treasure have excelled themselves and used clever coding routines which were previously believed impossible on the Megadrive. As such, you can expand to see loads of sprite rotation and enlargement as these over-sized baddies square up for the fight.



PROJECT	DYNAMITE HEADY
PUBLISHER	SEGA
INITIATED	AUGUST '93
RELEASE	AUTUMN
FORMAT	MEGADRIVE
DEVELOPERS	TREASURE



▼ *A sequence of shots of the versatile Headdy.*



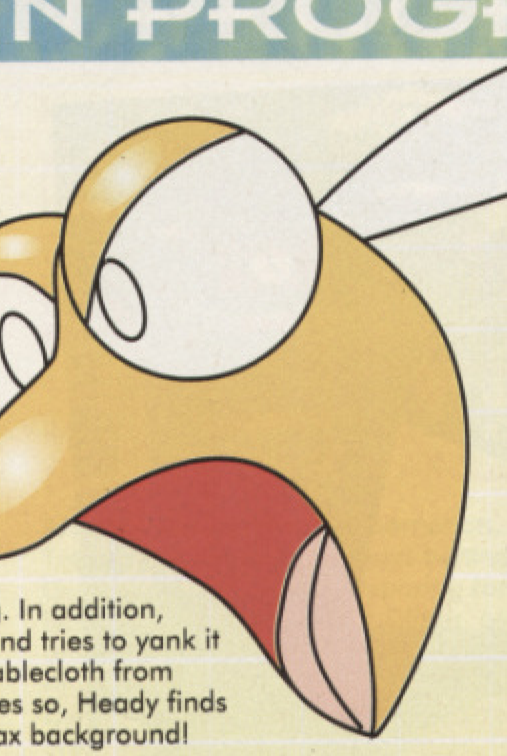


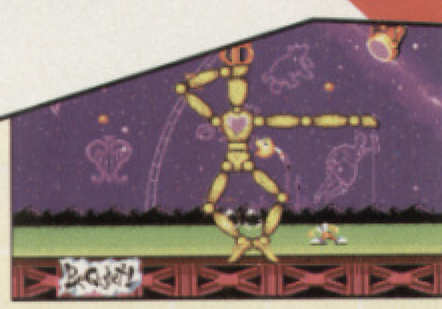
OFF YOUR HEAD

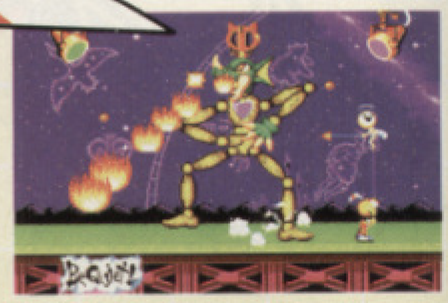
The one particularly useful thing about having a detachable head is that you can swap it whenever you feel the need. Thus, in addition to lobbing it at the enemy and using it to climb on to higher ledges (with his teeth no less!), Heady can also upgrade his bonce to a better model. These include ones which allow him to breathe fire or are harder and consequently kill off the bosses a little faster, and ones which shrink our hero and give him the power of flight. It's not all good news, though, and Heady should keep an eye out for several bad power-ups left by the kidnapper — including one which trebles the size of his head, making it too heavy for him to carry!

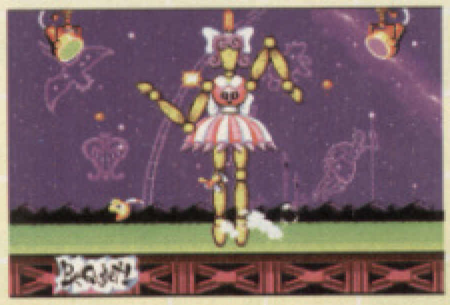
SPOOKY...

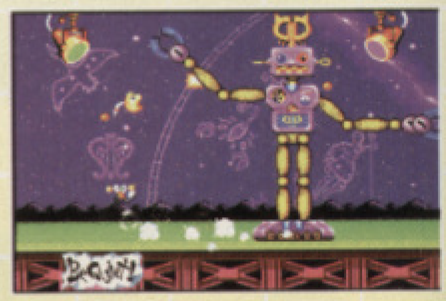
Weird humour played a massive part in Gunstar heroes, and Dynamite Heady features some equally sur parts. For instance, as our prepares to face a vicious cat boss, the feline looks up and is duly quashed by an over-sized dog which falls from the sky! The mutt then proceeds to chew up the scenery and spits them out as mini-bosses which Heady must destroy before the next one comes along. In addition, another boss grabs the ground and tries to yank it away like a magician pulling a tablecloth from under a dinner service. As he does so, Heady finds himself somewhere in the parallax background!





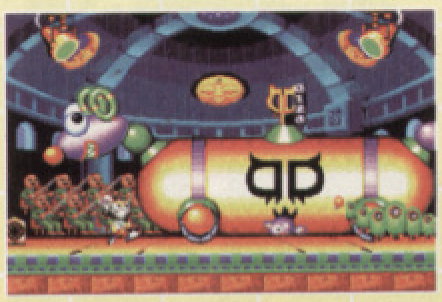


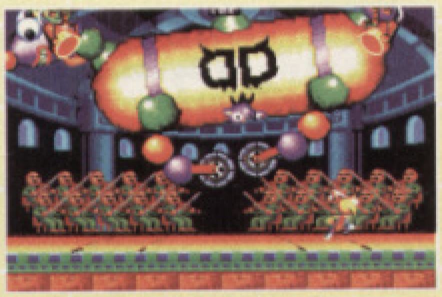


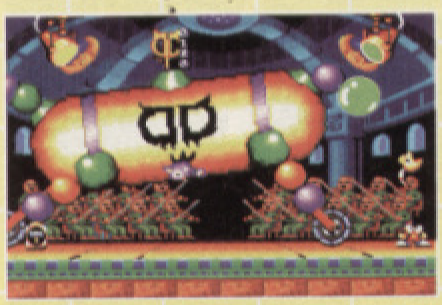


▲ ***Heady takes on D'arcy Bustle.***

▲ ***Heady takes on Robbie Robot.***









▲ ***Attack of the 'Contac 4000' boss.***



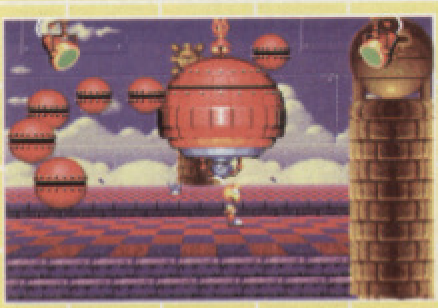


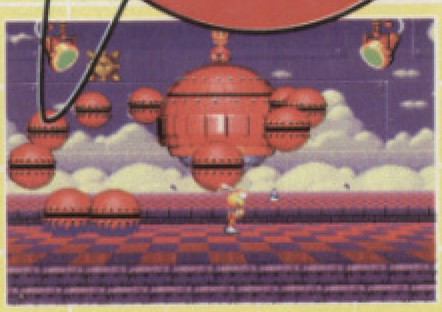


ANYTHING ELSE, SIR?

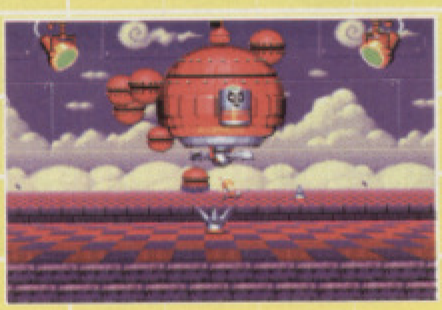
To keep the action varied, Treasure have added a number of sub-games to the basic platform action. For instance, as Heady nears the end of the second stage, a giant hand shoots out from he background and pulls him through to a shoot 'em up stage, where Heady uses his rapid-firing head to blast the assorted invaders. Others will be slightly harder to find, but, hey, do you want everything handed on a plate!











▲ ***Abducted by the hand from another dimension.***

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Ryan Giggs CHAMPIONS

He's football's latest darling, and he's part of the seemingly unstoppable Man Utd side. He is, of course, Ryan Giggs, and he's also the latest addition to Acclaim's licence list. STEVE MERRETT plays ball.





With beat 'em ups dominating for so long and the Basketball fad disappearing as fast as it came, the next 'in' genre is the footy game. Again. Yep, Kick Off III is warming up on the touchline, followed by Goal! from Virgin, U.S. Gold's World Cup licence (see preview on page 106), and Sensi is about to be unleashed for the Mega-CD. Always one to spot a hot new licence, though, Acclaim are about to wade in with a game tied in with Man Utd's young hot-shot and Welsh international, Ryan Giggs.

Coded by Park Place (the Madden men), Acclaim decided right at the start of the game's development that emphasis should be on playability rather than loads of confusing options. In addition, they also stipulated that the game should be more realistic than its competition — mainly to avoid the 32-0 score-lines possible with Sensi. With this in mind, Ryan Giggs's Champions uses a horizontally-scrolling pitch, with large sprites legging it to and fro and what Acclaim believe to be the most realistic control system to date.

Giggs himself is also drafted in every now and then to offer advice, but footy fans won't be able to see the result of his input until August when the game is released. As ever, though, MEAN MACHINES has got the first Megadrive pics of the game, now join us as we disassemble it before your very eyes...



The pitch man was only able to mow the penalty box in time for the match.

PROJECT
RYAN GIGGS CHAMPIONS
PUBLISHER
ACCLAIM
INITIATED
OCTOBER '93
RELEASE
AUGUST '94
FORMAT
MEGADRIVE
DEVELOPERS
PARK PLACE







▲ footballers flee the foul scene.

▼ The teams in this group have had disappointing results.

UNDER MY CONTROL

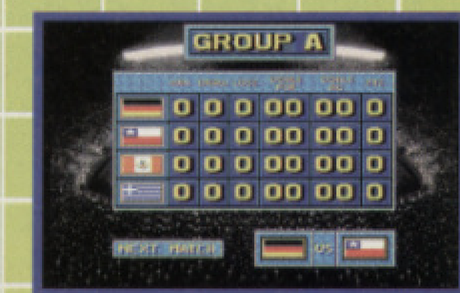
The benchmark all new football games are judged by is obviously EA's superb FIFA International Soccer. During Gigs' development, Park Place looked at each of the football games on offer and noted their faults and strengths. Sensi was criticised for being far too unrealistic due to the ridiculously high number of goals which can scored in a game, whilst FIFA was felt to seem a little too 'hands off' in the control department. As such, Ryan Giggs features all the strengths of the other games. Park Place have avoided the 'glue ball' syndrome whereupon the ball always sticks to the players feet, and made the game more of a passing affair as seen in Hudson's impressive Super NES kick-about, Virtual Soccer. They've even taken the chance to add a few extras, too, so that if a winger is being chased, they can use a short burst of speed to make that all-important break.



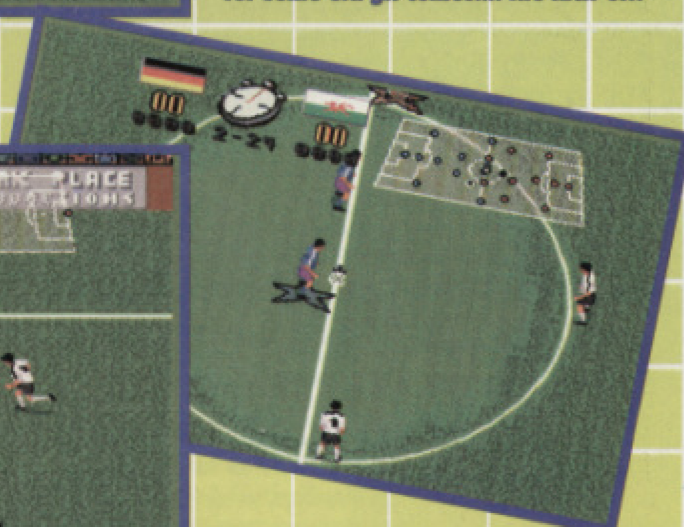
◄ The man with the golden feet.



▲ Unconventional keeping techniques, pt 1.

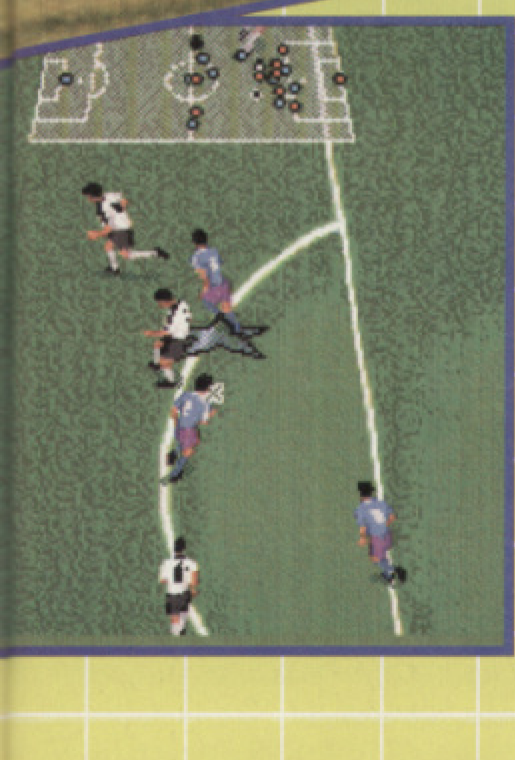


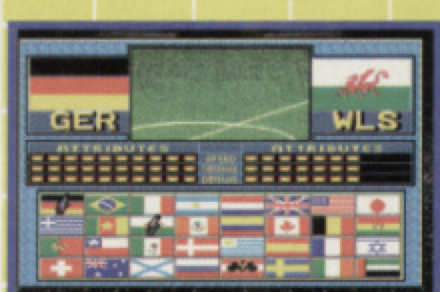
▼ After the brass band, the majorettes and the minute's silence for some old git comes.... the kick-off.





▲ Nigel Short is on the offensive, using the 'Pie and Bovril' opening with white.





► The little known nations of 'Ger' and 'Wls' take part.

TOURNAMENT FIGHTERS

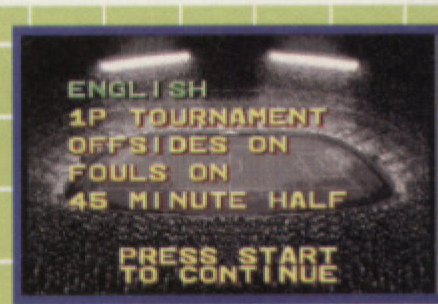
In addition to its exhibition matches, Champions offers an international challenge where thirty-two international sides come together for a massive tournament. Most of this year's World Cup sides are in there — as are England for some strange reason (and the Welsh are only there because Master Giggs plays for them!) — and each have varying levels of skill in three departments: speed, offence, and defence. Whenever a team is selected, a trio of bars appear containing ten squares. The more squares a team has in each department, the stronger they are — with Germany scoring a perfect 100%!

TINKER, TAILOR

Before the match starts, Champions allows the player to tinker with its options. Park Place have deliberately kept things simple, so these are limited to turning the off-side rule on or off, and selecting your team's formations. In addition, during the game, the pitch is kept similarly uncluttered, with the only real options allowing you to use a scanner to locate your team and remove smaller details like the score box.



▲ A rather lonely, forlorn scene.



▲ The pumping excitement of options!









▲ That's a funny pose of our Ryan.

YOU COULD ALMOST BE THERE!

Park Place's attempts to make the game as realistic as possible stretches to the fallibility of the players, too. There's none of this Sensi malarkey where the players score from the half-way box – instead, goals are really fought for. For instance, as with the real thing, turning whilst trying to shoot normally sees the ball spanged in completely the wrong direction, whilst 'ordinary' shots can be muffed simply by mistiming the kick. As such, before you master the kicks and passes, your matches will resemble Sunday league games played by fat blokes who drink pints of beer at half-time!

▼ All the sprites in the games seem to have at least one leg in the air. Realism, probably.





KEEPER'N EYE ON THINGS

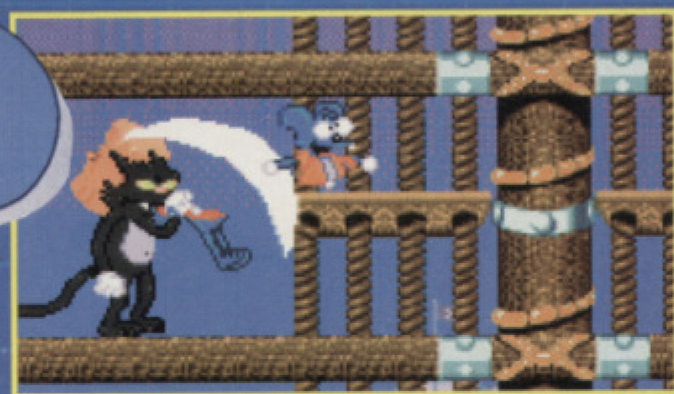
As Jimmy Hill will tell you, good goalkeeping is every bit as important as scoring goals – and the Acclaim game features Dave Seaman-style goalies who dive at attackers' feet, pluck the ball out of the air, and palm it over the bar. In addition, Ryan Giggs' Champions features three goalie options. The first gives complete computer-controlled 'keepers who very rarely make a mistake, whilst the 'semi' option means that the player takes over at particularly dangerous times. Finally, and for the really brave amongst you, full control means that every slip up is down to you!


There are some
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ITCHY AN

Cartoon licences are nothing new, but Acclaim have stepped in with a conversion of a cartoon within a cartoon. Itchy and Scratchy is avidly watched by Bart Simpson and his clan, and Steve Merrett was there to welcome them to the Megadrive.





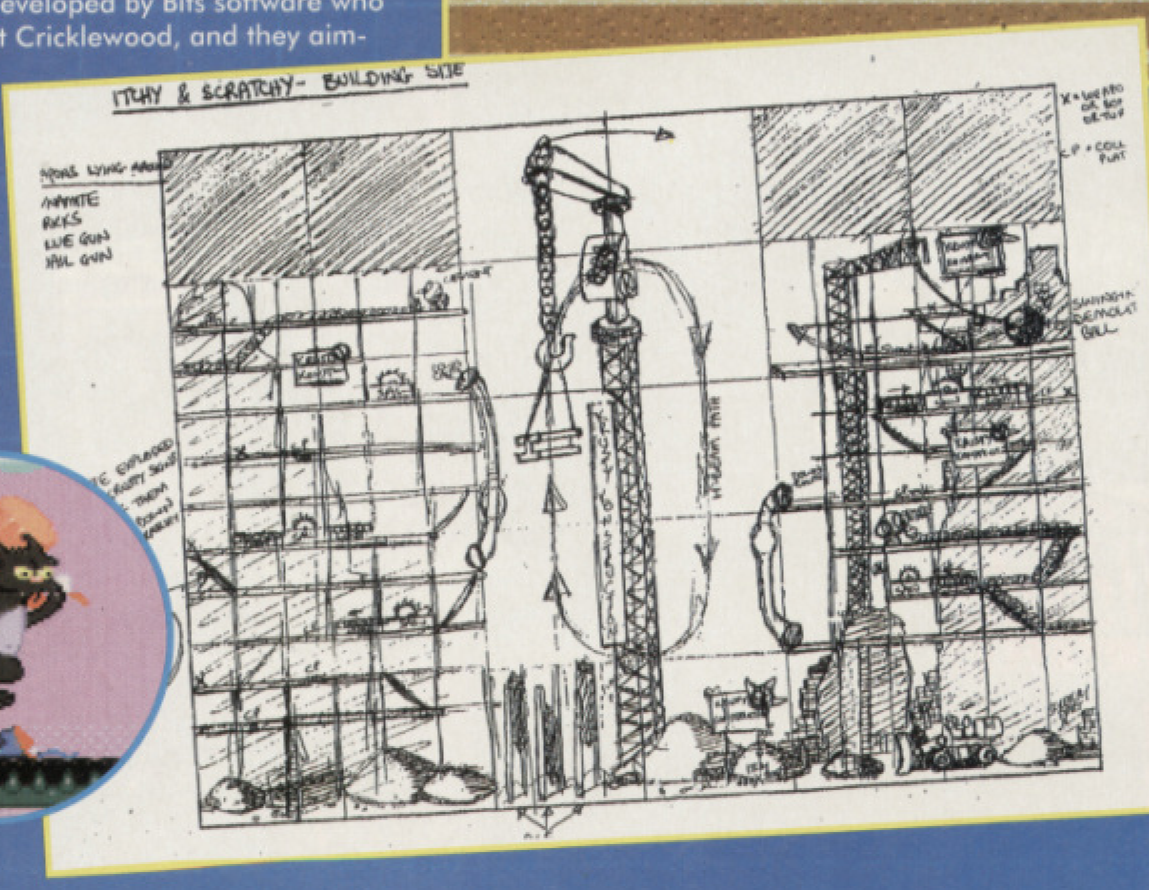




Remember when cartoons were extremely funny because they were excessively violent? When Tom was chasing Jerry and would run through a wire fence, only to disintegrate into cube-shaped pieces a few seconds later? It was a time when cartoons didn't have to answer to Tony 'Baldrick' Robinson on 'Stay Tooned', and before cartoons only existed to sell things. Well, forget Tom and Jerry, because animated violence is back with vengeance, courtesy of Bart Simpson's favourite show, Itchy And Scratchy — and such is their popularity, that Acclaim are giving the moggy and mouse pair their own platform game.

Plot details have never played a major part in the cartoons, so Acclaim have had pretty much carte blanche as as far as the game's scenario goes. Thus, Itchy and Scratchy is supposed to be an 'interactive cartoon', with the player controlling Itchy the mouse as he avoids the dozens of attempts on his life by Scratchy the cat. The game spans nine scrolling stages, and the only way to complete a level is to use the objects found within to kill off the pursuing puss — which roughly equates as a level for each of Scratchy's nine lives!

The game is being developed by Bits software who are based in deepest Cricklewood, and they aiming to make the game as close as possible to the cartoon by using the same locations. As of yet, though, Itchy And Scratchy is a mere 50% complete, and isn't due for release until some time in Autumn.





VERDICT: MOUSE-ADVENTURE

Bits have planned every level out on paper, and whilst they vary in terms of content, the 8-MEG allotted to the game means the levels have to run along similar lines. The main bulk of the game takes place across a series of eight-way-scrolling stages, with Itchy leaping across a series of platforms to escape the pursuing cat. After several close scrapes, Scratchy will then appear as a boss, suitably enhanced by whatever mechanics Bits deem worthy.

D SCRATCHY

ITCHY AND SCRATCHY

ACCLAIM

AUGUST '93

AUGUST '94

MEGADRIVE

BITS

IT'S CARTOON TIME...

As of yet, the order the stages will appear hasn't been decided. However, Bits have lifted key ideas from past cartoons to make up the nine stages, and you can expect to risk life and limb in the following locations:

Building Site:



Cranes and unsteady girders form the basis for this stage, with cement mixers and all manner of power tools adding to the mayhem. This may also be the game's only vertically-scrolling level, although this has yet to be decided.

Mediaeval Village:

Itchy and co take you back to the days of iron maidens, catapults, and drawbridges — and keep an eye out for the boiling oil!



Spanish Galleon:

Ooh, me barnacles. There should be yo-ho-ho-ing aplenty when the duo get to grips with rigging, walking the plank, and loosing off cannons.



Factory:

Conveyor belts make up the largest part of this stage, and lead to huge crushing machines. Switches allow Itchy to use them to his advantage, though...

Wild West:

Borrowing from Road Runner, this stage is set in a canyon full of wobbly rocks and spiky cacti. A red Indian influence ensures there'll be a bit of bow and arrow malarkey, too.



Underwater:

As of yet, Bits aren't sure whether to keep this as a split level where the pair swim towards a a submarine, or opt for an entirely water-based stage set within the wreckage of the aforementioned galleon.



Space:

No firm details yet, but Bits are currently tossing up between a space station setting or the moon's surface.

Prehistoric:

Jurassic larks ahoy, as a Flintstone-style housing estate — complete with dinosaurs — is unveiled. Weapons within this level are likely to be clubs and small reptiles.

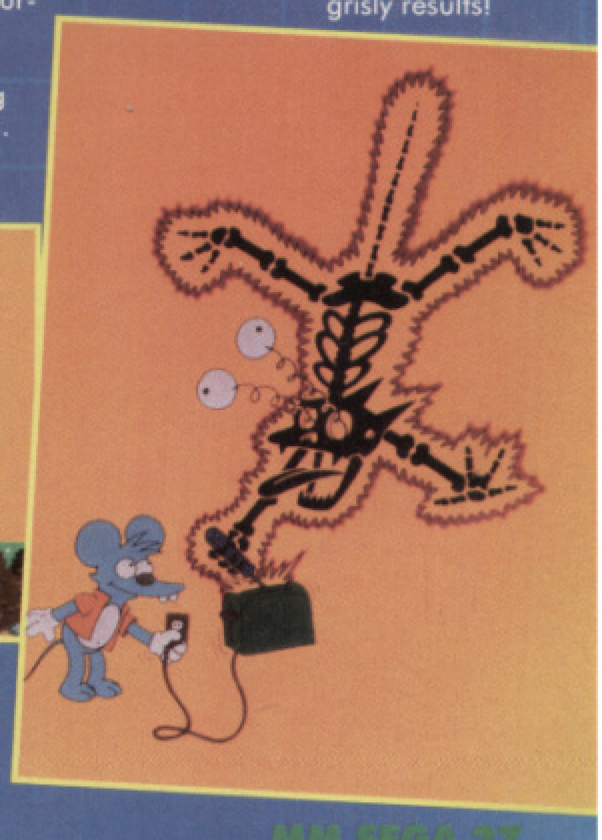


House:

The final, and largest location, and split into several rooms, each with new weaponry.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS

In true cartoon form, Scratchy can summon an unbelievable number of weapons to use against the tiny rodent — including a series of 'boss' vehicles. Frying pans and bazookas form just part of his arsenal, whilst Itchy is initially just armed with a large mallet. Thankfully, it's not completely one-sided, and grenades and chainsaws rather conveniently pop up, which allow Itchy to pay the evil cat back — with grisly results!



The robots are revolting. Not the cue for a bad joke, but the basic plot of newcomer Mirage's Rise of the Robots. GUS SWAN takes a look at the sort of beat 'em up that goes with Perrier, Calvin Klein and stubble...?

RISE OF THE ROBOTS



▲*"Gee, buddy, your breath stinks. Here, have a mint."*

It had to come. While the Eighties was a decade of conspicuous consumption for Lawyers, Insurers and anyone within sniffing distance of the City of London, the 'design' craze never touched the world of video games. This looks like being corrected by Mirage Software, and their multi-format designer beat 'em up; Rise of the Robots.

The in-house development team, Instinct Design make it clear that 'Rise' is intended as part homage to classic beat 'em ups we have known and loved, even predating SFII to games like Palace Software's 'Barbarian' and 'Way of the Exploding Fist' from Melbourne House. Mentioning old titles like these suggests Instinct have taken a serious look at the existing genre before starting out on their own project.

They are quick to point out shortcomings in many recent combat games, which offer too much presentation without the substance of gameplay to match: "too diverse and too complex...wave after wave of easy opponents, a joystick full of moves, most of which are never used (or never found)", say Mirage. Their approach is more stimulating and varied opponents, impressive graphics techniques and the use of Artificial Intelligence to provide a consistent challenge.

These are tough objectives to set yourself. Instinct think they'll succeed by using pioneering development applications, a team which specialises in related fields such as interior design, and what they call the 'designer per game philosophy'. Here, one person has an awesome amount of responsibility for the project — the sort of approach Woody Allen takes to film directing. The benefits are measured in the quality of games emerging from teams that embrace the concept; Bitmap Brothers, Sensible Software and Bullfrog. Illustrious company that Instinct would like to join.

EVOLUTIONS

Rise contains a hierarchy of designs for its robotic opponents. The foes are visualised as having had worker roles within the complex before the takeover, and the freehand sketches of each reflects those purposes. Your cyborg is linked into an information net, which reveals data on each opponent as you encounter them. All the robots have very different attack patterns, and each requires a special method of disablement:



THE SUPERVISOR

The team intended something special for the end, and the Supervisor is surely it. Instinct plan to bring action morphing to the Mega-CD, with the Supervisor changing its shape as the battle progresses, by using her semi-liquid alloy construction. Read the panel on graphics to see how they intend to achieve it. Tactics also play a part, with the droid being able to recharge at will on certain floor panels within the arena.

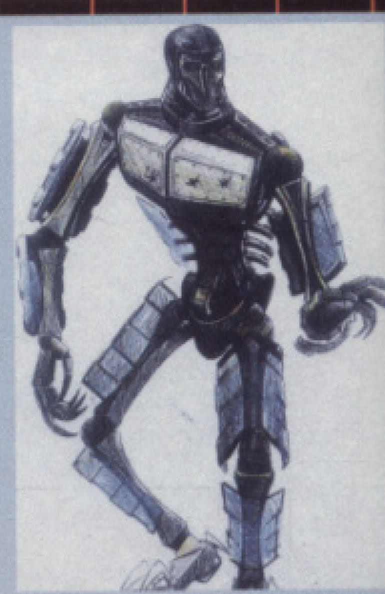
LOADER

The most basic opponent. It's original function is as a cargo mover. In offensive mode it uses the fork-lift arms as offensive weapons. Squat, ugly and easy to beat.



SOLDIER

The latter droids, including Soldier, exhibit more humanoid appearance and higher intelligence. The robot is constructed with armour-plating on a skeletal frame, which Instinct will create with textured rendering.



PROJECT
RISE OF THE ROBOTS

PUBLISHER
MIRAGE

INITIATED
FEBRUARY 93

RELEASE
TBA

FORMAT
MEGA-CD

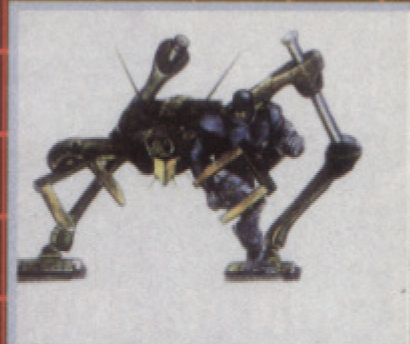
DEVELOPERS
INSTINCT

RIP AND PLOT



One 'classic' element of the game is the plot. As suggested by the title, Mirage have engineered the game around a machine revolution story. The game is set in the 22nd century, in the precincts of a global robotics concern called Electrocorp. This secretive company's business is heavy-duty Military and Industrial robots, and their production is centred at a plant entitled Metropolis 4. Electrocorp decided to 'rationalise' their operation by removing all unnecessary human input from the production process. Living things were gradually phased out of Metropolis 4, to be replaced with a new generation super-cyborg called the Supervisor. However, things went off track. The Supervisor had been infected by an ego-virus, and she shut down the plant and began reprogramming the existing equipment to join in the rebellion.

Offsite engineers for Electrocorp found they had lost communications with their plant. Sending another cyborg in to restore order was out of the question, as it would be susceptible to the virus. As luck would have it, a crack commando offered his human brain to be encased in a mechanoid body strong enough to battle the Supervisor and hard enough to check the Rise of the Robots.



CRUSHER

Mirage are clearly excited about the potential for this droid. Here you get a sense of its scale against your cyborg. Those huge pincers form the basis of its attack, and the head antennae play a part too. Influences from the insect-world, and the power loader from the film Aliens are evident.

FIGHTER

This is the penultimate challenge — the Supervisor's own bodyguard, no less. Mirage point to the styling of Japanese toy robots as the influence behind the design. They imagine the Fighter to be the product of Electrocorp's



BUILDER

The inspiration for the design is clearly simian. This lowering, moody sketch of the ape-like robot-assembler shows the atmosphere Rise is trying to produce.





▼*"Hello, I'm a gratuitously large picture, I'm afraid. Please adopt me."*

GENDER RENDER

A trivial but interesting fact about the Supervisor droid is that it's designated as a 'she'. Quite how mechanical creatures develop sexual characteristics is unclear, but Sean Griffith, Game Designer explains how the idea evolved: "The Supervisor is the most human-looking of all the robots and as we started its design we found that its metallic texture and fighting style befitted a female form. Sean thinks it's great: "to see a female character in a game that doesn't look like a Sindy doll or female Arnie". With the Supervisor's sleek curves, he has a good point.

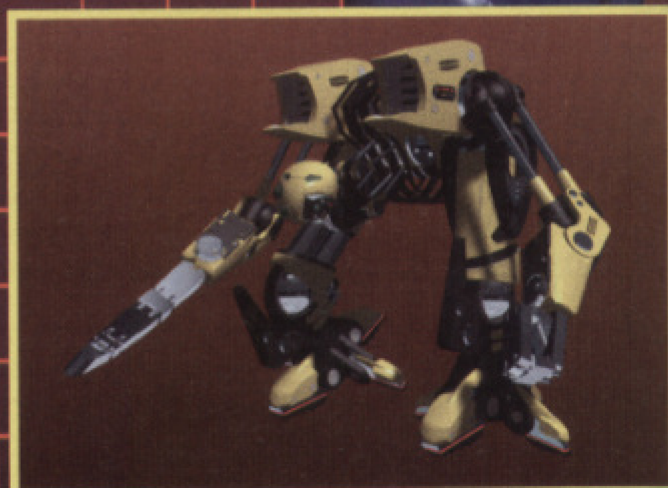


3D VC

Mirage describe their graphics development software as 'bespoke'. With it they'll extend the Mega-CDs powers into the realm of animated ray-traced graphics, the sort of effects normally reserved for PC CD-ROM. In fact, the cinematic sequences which occur throughout the game are identical to the PC format, with only a reduction in the amount of colours. Mirage estimate 300Mb are reserved on disc for these. Instinct are also using a system they call 3D VC — three-dimensional visual contouring. It works by creating objects, then layering



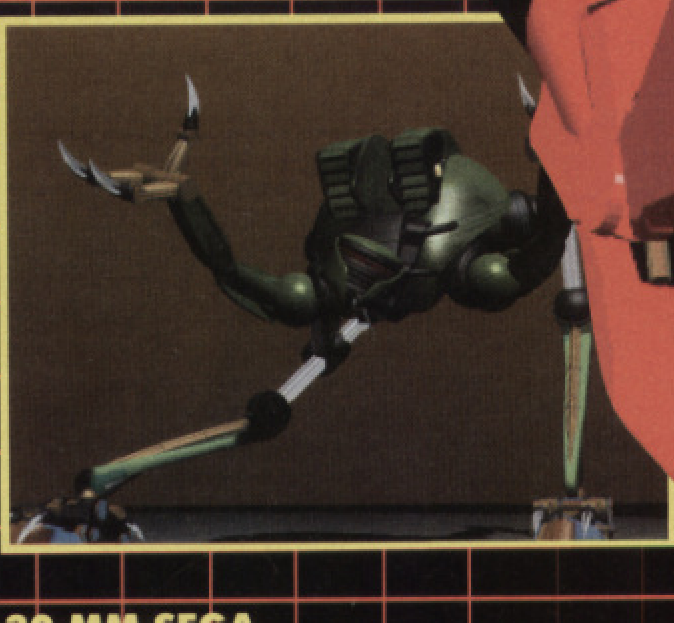


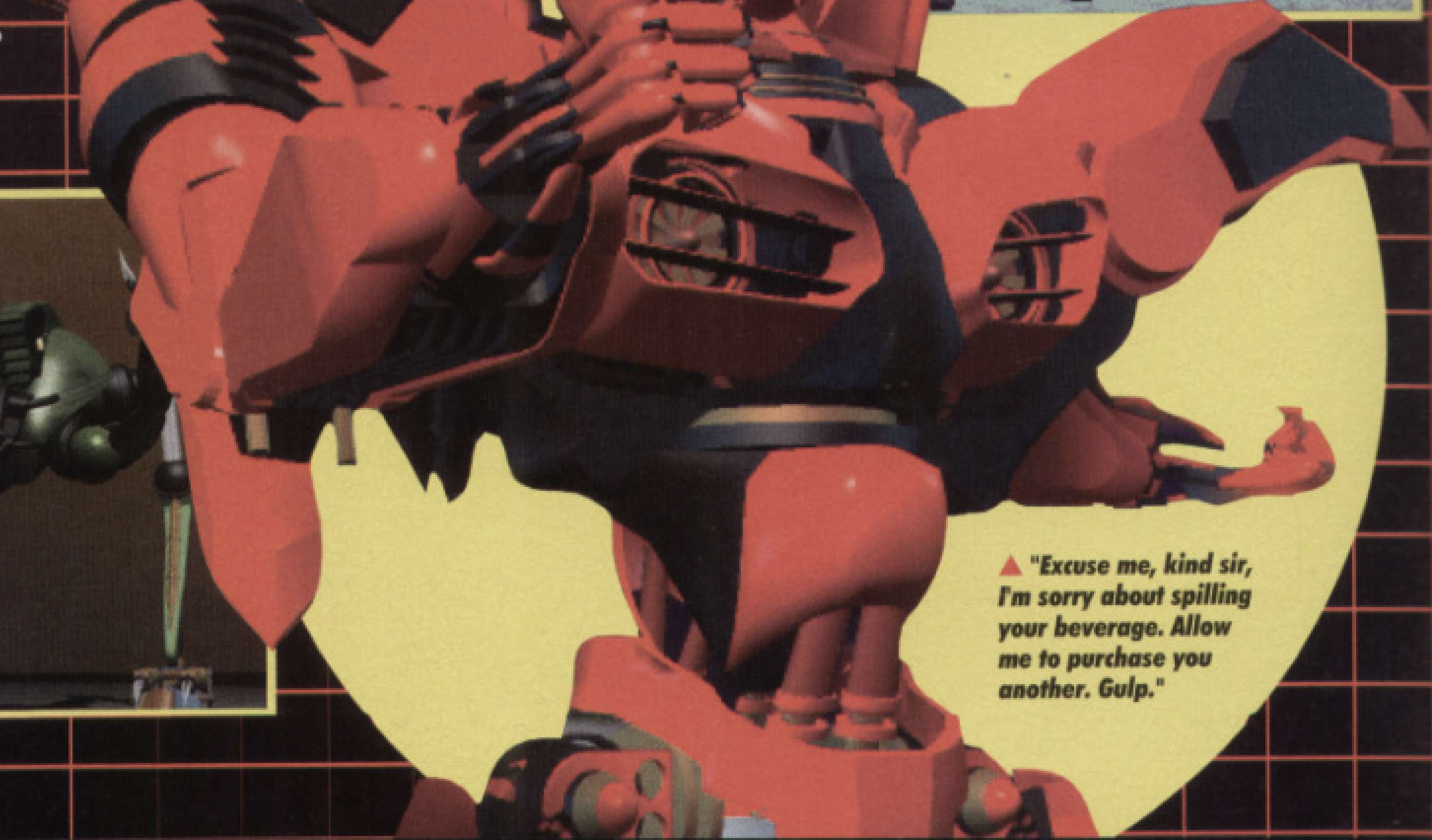


DESIGN DECADE

It isn't clear whether Instinct want Rise of the Robots to be seen as a 'designer game' but they've brought design processes to the project. Heading the team is Sean Griffiths, an ex-Bitmap Brother. Kwan Lee comes from the world of Interior Design to create the styling of the Metropolis 4 complex. He describes it as: "an Interior Designer's dream. I've been given an entire building to design to my own tastes, and with no budget restraints". Sean Naden works on the 3D modelling, which plays a large part in the frequent cinematic sequences that intersperse the game. For convincing movement, the robot graphics are designed in segments which are 'stacked' to animate the final composite sprite. The other two team members are converting the game to a plethora of formats as well as the Mega-CD.







▲ ***"Excuse me, kind sir, I'm sorry about spilling your beverage. Allow me to purchase you another. Gulp."***


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MEAN YOB

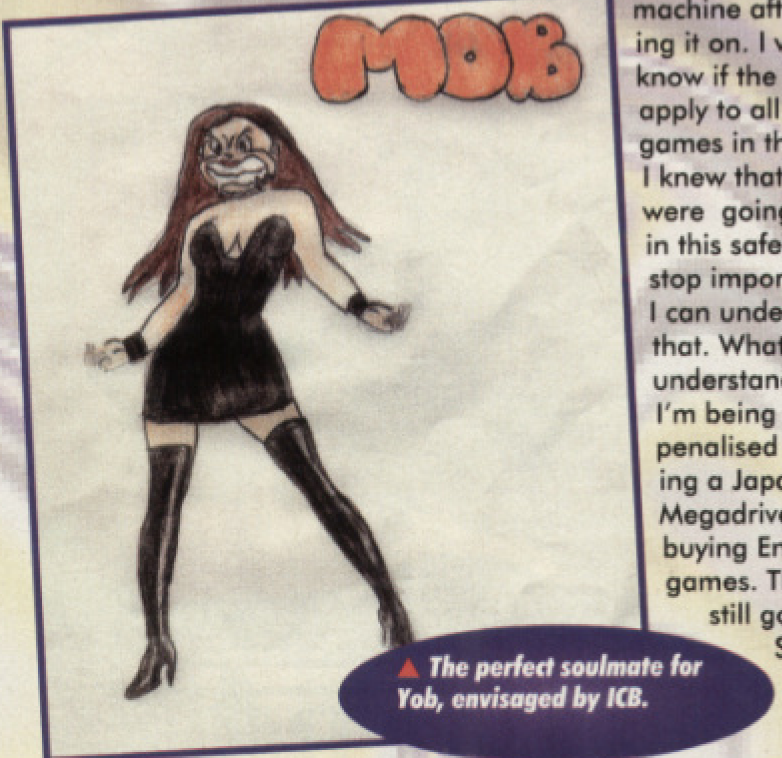
As I sit here plagued by my piles. Of letters, that is. I have just one thing on my Yobbish mind. Just what is it about the 70s that created such classic TV sitcoms? I mean, the Steptoes, Fawlty Towers, It Ain't Half Hot, Mum. Blimey, what a cornucopia of corny fun. But what do we have today? Nelson's Column, Up The Garden Path, and loads of American tosh. Still, whilst you're wondering about that, I can breathe a sigh of relief because I've managed to fill this space again. So, if you want to talk about crap sitcoms like Metal Mickey, Home Improvement, and So Haunt Me, drop me a line. Alternatively, you can just stick to sending me inane insults which feature the words 'Poo', 'Bum' and 'Crap' which so many of you seem to find so funny. Ah well, takes all sorts, but if you still want to send them, address your wafflings to :

**A FUNNY BANDANA AND AN INFLATED EGO MAILBAG,
MEAN MACHINES SEGA,
Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London,
EC1R 3AU**



KIMONO CALENDER

Dear YOB
I am extremely cheesed off. Why? Well, for Christmas I asked for a copy of Sensible Soccer on the Megadrive. I opened it on the morn and carefully loaded it into the Megadrive (no mean feat after the extended Ribena drinking contest I had the previous night). Anyway, there I sat in anticipation with the Sega logo on screen, then I was confronted by a bordered box. Inside it read: "This game cartridge is only designed to run on a European Megadrive system". Was I cheesed off or what?
I have owned my Megadrive for over three years and now I can't play Sensible Soccer. FIFA only works if I reset the machine after turning it on. I want to know if the same will apply to all English games in the future. I knew that Sega were going to bring in this safety chip to stop importing, and I can understand that. What I don't understand is that I'm being penalised for owning a Japanese Megadrive and buying English games. The money still goes to Sega Europe, so where's the problem in that? My only option now is to buy an English Megadrive. If that's what Sega intend for Japanese owners, I might just take my business to Nintendo.
Steve Gregory, Bristol
YOB:Yes, Master Cheese Baron, and I'm afraid it isn't going to get any better. Sega got a little cheesed off with all the imported software flooding the UK, so 'Lock Out' chips were the answer. Still, at least you can play FIFA...



▲ *The perfect soulmate for Yob, envisaged by ICB.*

PILE OF VIDEOS

Dear YOB
Hi there, listen here smarty pants of MEAN MACHINES SEGA. I want to know what the Nth dimension is from the game Zool. Some people say it is all kinds of things, so can I have your expert advice, please, and tell me the truth.
I.M Silly
YOB:It's a place inhabited by incontinent pillocks such as yourself, who believe that Zool is the next Sonic or Mario. It's also the place where rubber bedsheets are the order of the day, and where most of its inhabitants drown in a puddle of their own making at night.


▲ *Stephen Newton shows Cosmic after thugs have squirted Superglue in his eye.*

LUCY

Dear YOB
Me and my brother have been saving hard for a Mega-CD. We even sold all our cart games. Mum gave us £150 for Christmas (thanks again, Mum) and we finally had enough to buy one. Now a bloke at school reckons that we've wasted our money! He says that Sega are bringing out a new chip for cart games that'll make them even better than CD games. He told us that Virtua Racing won't even come out on Mega-CD because of this chip and that was one of the reasons we bought a Mega-CD.



▲ Richard Himsworth provides some Lemming relief.

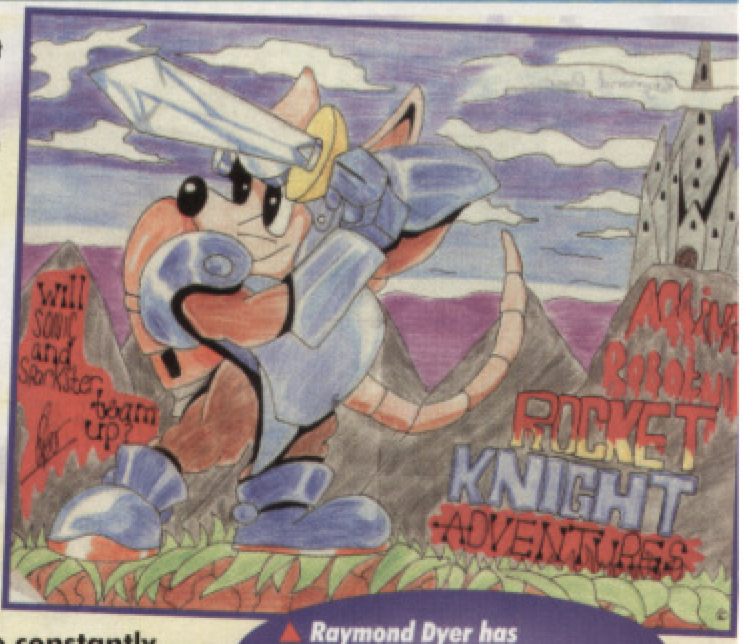
Please YOB, tell us he's full of bull and if he isn't kill everyone at Sega for us (and our mum's) sake.
Mark and Paul Walsh, Walton-on-Thames
YOB:Oh, and because you own a Mega-CD you can't play Virtua! C'mon, yes the Mega-CD hasn't done as well as was hoped and the software is a little on the poor side, but at least you have the likes of Sonic CD and Double Switch to keep you going. I really hate irritating berks like that so-called Sega authority at your school. They're bilious pustules who deserve to be squeezed out f existence. Bring on the Oxy10, Nursie...

ZIG AND ZAG STICKERS

Dear YOB
On hearing that Capcom are already planning to start work on a console version of Super Streetfighter II, I was disappointed, after initial excitement, to find that there are only four new fighters. Okay, that makes in total a, er, lot of fights, but — isn't it about time they ditched all their old characters? Why don't they spend their mega-bucks creating and perfecting 12 all-new characters with all-new special moves instead of releasing endless rehashes of a decent but dated game. It's time for some new faces. What about BUXOM BLONDE™? First she whips you into submission then smothers you to death between...(censored). She might not be the greatest warrior ever but she and her 'special move' are original. There's no point in just slightly changing things. If Capcom don't realise this before the other big boys (Takara, Acclaim and Sega who have all recently released beat 'em ups) then they are, without a doubt, going to lose that Streetfighting crown.
Lee Atkinson, Spennymoor, Co. Durham
YOB:I bet you sit at home dreaming about being squashed to death by a buxom video game character don't you? Deary, deary me. Capcom are currently working on a new Street Fighter set in a different game environment, but Super was meant to act as a filler to keep people like yourself interested in the series. Blimey, if Capcom had known what a sad and lonely person you are, though, they could have saved a few grand and just sent you a copy of Razzle.

MEGA-PC

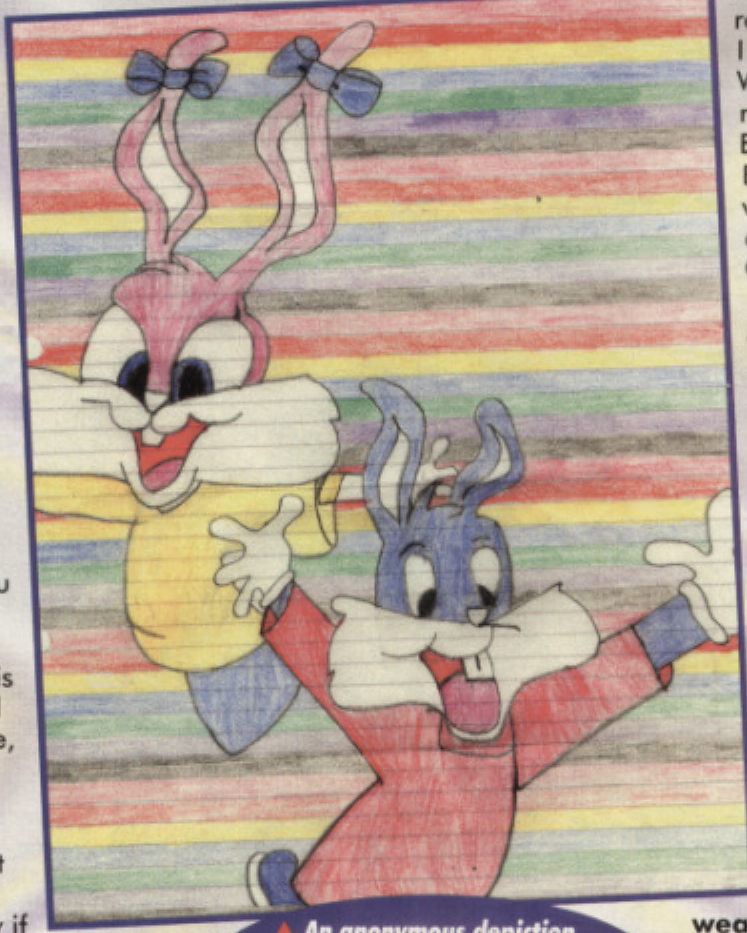
Dear YOB
Who is Ed Lomas Pinky Floyd? If he's in Paul's Tips is he better than you, because you're not so bad? Why do you do MEAN MACHINES SEGA, not him if Ed Pinky is better? Why? I read Megatech and more, but he is in that as well, so who is he and where are his tips from? Why? But me and Steven my friend want to know if he is from Rochester near us in Chatham, but do you know him or meet him?
PS. Can I have a job and is FIFA on game master any good?
Peter Johns, Chatham
YOB:You're not so bad? Not him if he is better? Don't tell me that all Chatham's schools have closed down? Ed Lomas is a bit of a MEAN MACHINES SEGA matey who constantly supplies us with tips, and Paul Davies sees him occasionally. Mind you, Paul will see anyone who's nice to him, so don't consider it too much of an honour. Honestly, he's like a little puppy dog sometimes — even to the point of rolling over to you can tickle his belly. But we can't discuss that until the court case is over...



▲ Raymond Dyer has Sparkster wielding his weapon.

EMPTY COKE BOTTLE

Dear YOB
Please answer this simple question. If then why do the batteries in my Game Gear run out after just two damn weeks? Please help me.
Jilly Johnston, Northampton
YOB:Because, the Game Gear suffers from particularly hungry power drain – now that wasn't hard to figure out was it... Hey, you're not THE Jilly Johnson are you? You know, the Page 3 girl? It would explain a lot...


▲ An anonymous depiction of hysterical cartoon rabbits, yesterday.

INFLATABLE BASE-BALL BAT

Dear YOB
After reading your excellent review of Eternal Champions, I thought to myself , 'wow! What a brill mag'. I think your mag was too generous with Eternal Champions' graphics. Eternal Champions (which I will continue to call EC) is coming out in January yet Gamesmaster say it's out in February, Mega Power say March. Who is right? Don't get me wrong I am a fan of your mag, but I'm not sure when it comes out. Please print this letter so I can say to my friend: "I've got my name in a mag and you haven't", and I can gloat all day.
Gavin Spence, Lanarkshire
YOB:It was originally planned as a January release, but slipped slightly. As for getting your name in the mag, I'd just like to take this chance to say 'Gavin Spence has got a face like a pig's jacksie, wears dresses and idiot mittens, and is a complete gink' — now boast about that!



▲ Raiden in the Mortal Kombat amputees' Edition, by Murat Gurel.

EMPTY JIFFY BAG

Dear YOB
I know that this isn't tips section, but this letter comes from Finland and I need desperately tips to following Megadrive games: Ecco the Dolphin, Gunstar Heroes, Rocket Knight Adventures. Oh, and don't tell me that tip which was in issue 16 for Gunstar Heroes, I already know that. And if you don't print this letter and answer my question I'm going to 'visit' in your office and rip your face off. Then I'm going to blow up your office killing everyone in that building.
Hawk, Finland
YOB:Yeah? Well we're waiting for you, Hawk. Basically, you can forget getting any tips from me because I don't do them. And no matter how scary you try to be, your wet lettuce threats don't cut any mustard. Besides, what have the Finns ever done for us?

DINKY TOY BUS

Dear YOB
With Christmas over for another year, I found myself bored and decided to write to King Yobster yourself. I have written a rap called 'Megadrive'.

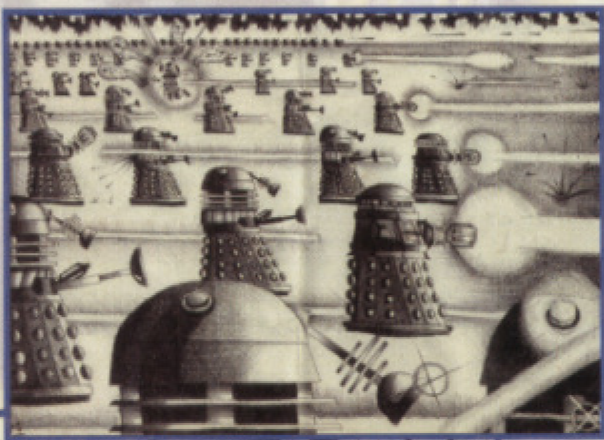
'Megadrive'
The Megadrive is an awesome machine
The people who play it aren't just teens.
They range from small children to OAPs —
Start off beginner, work to expertise
There's software houses, like Virgin and EA
Who make the games, and make them fun to play
There's computer magazines, their [sic] in the know
They tell you what to be with your well-earned dough.
Some people out there think computer games are bad
I think these people are just sad.
They say these games are violent gory thrillers
That turn their fans into crazy psycho killers.
They are wrong, computer games are cool
Anyone who disagrees is a fool
Sport-driving-platform-flight sim:
All these and more on this fine system.
In case you've forgotten, the system I describe,
Is the mighty, awesome SEGA MEGADRIVE.
Chris Shaw, Belfast
YOB:Er, yes... thank you MC Shaw. Although somehow I doubt if House Of Pain and Cypress Hill are filling their undies at the thought of your rapping 'talents' (used in the loosest terms possible).

MILKY LENS SPECS

Dear YOB
I read from your last issue that Jaz has gone to America. That was a bit of a shock, I can tell you. Let's face it there isn't really anybody else who could call themselves a 'games personality'. You lot at MMS are sound enough, and you make a great mag, but I'd hardly call you star material. What I find even sadder is that the people trying to take Jazza's place are pretty pathetic. In some really crap Sega mag there's a geezer called Dave Perry who's always being made out to be some kind of games guru. My butt! I saw him on Gamesmaster and the guy sucks eggs through straws! He even made 'Dexta Fletcha' seem like a normal human being. On the subject of the lamentable 'Lamesmaster', what ever happened to Dominik 'Oh, my word' Diamond. One minute he's leaving to become a star and the next he's loitering behind Danny Curley's blubbery body on the cover of a tips video. Of course, he'd rather be doing that than having his own show on Channel Four, but all I can say is come back Jazza, all is forgiven.
Gary Crow, Glasgow
YOB:Jaz may be gone, but his spirit lives on in his news column where he tells us of all the goings-on in the US of A. As for Gamesmaster, it has to be said that it has completely lost its way. Whatever happened to the mixed batch of news, reviews and tips we used to have? Now it's all challenges and not half as interactive as it has to be. And, please, will someone please point Dexter to a bar of soap — he always looks so grubby. Tsk, tsk.



▲ Oh Lordy, it's those Eternal Champions! From M. Adams, Cheltenham.





▲ Ex-Editor Rich Leadbetter throws a strop. Thanks, Paul Johnson.

MYSTIC YOB

Our monthly contact with the beyond was ceased because it was just too uncanny. But don your rubber pants once more, because Mystic Yob is back...

Mr Eggywiffer — you are the tragic illustration of what a forceps delivery can mean.

Paul Reid — Forget journalism. I'd concentrate on getting a job in B&Q.

A. Dunn — You CAN use it for that, but forget about ever getting Child Benefit.

Phillip Lowell — Yeah? Well lick mine too!

Aaron Ratcliffe — I would call it thieving from your mother, you little turd.

More spiritual messages next month.



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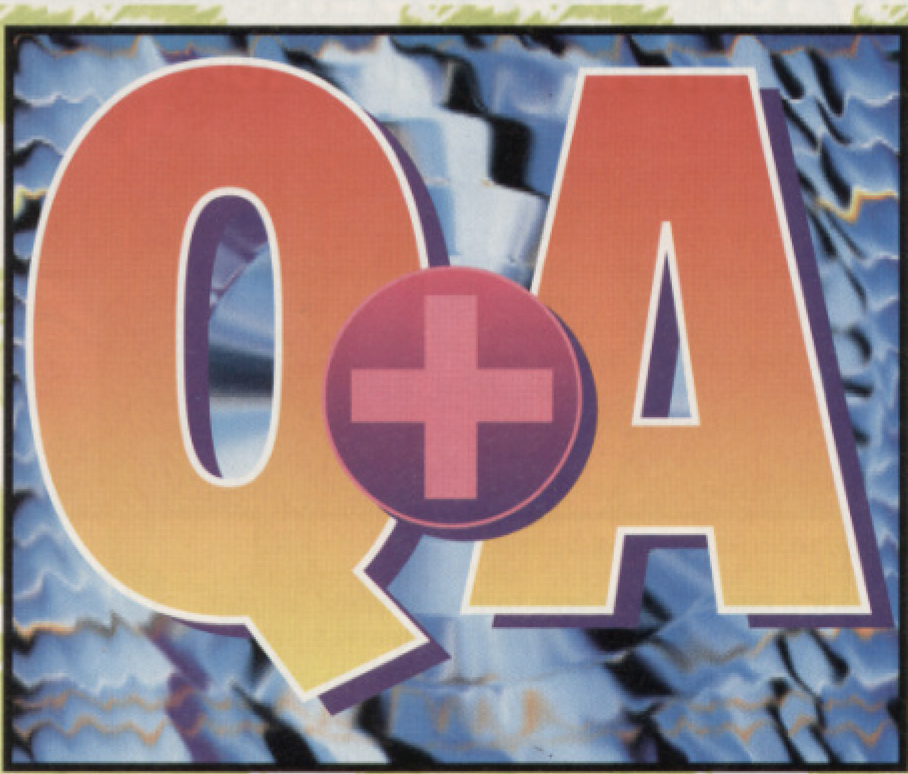
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MM April 94



A normal life! Yes, a normal life. Despite his greatly-enlarged cranium, Steve found that, after a while, he could move about pretty much as before he adopted Jaz's console knowledge. Granted he'd had to have stabilisers affixed to the back and front of his head to stop him teetering over, but he still looked pretty normal. Well, normal compared to one of those tartan trolleys old ladies pull behind them anyway. So, if you can catch him before he goes for another trundle and before some blind old bint stuffs a packet of Lincoln biscuits down the front of his chequered trousers, Steve is still here to answer all your Sega-related questions. What's more, he's pretty good when it comes to discussing pet problems, too, so if your dog's down in the mouth or your cat's gone all stroppy, drop him a line at:

NO, I HAVEN'T FARTED — I ALWAYS SMELL LIKE THIS, Q&A, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU

FANTASY ISLAND

Dear Steve

Please help my very desperate problem. I love the Golden Axe games and when I first bought my Megadrive I bought Golden Axe straight away, and thought the game was brilliant. Then Golden Axe II came out and I went crazy over that. Now, I know that Golden Axe III is supposed to be crap, but I want it for my collection to go with the other two. Anyway, this the question which has been bugging me for months: When is Golden Axe III going to be released in the UK? I've phoned Sega about it, but they were no help. All they keep telling me is that there's no release date yet. Are they telling the truth or keeping it a secret. I think it boils down to Sega messing about with the release dates. I was so desperate to get Golden Axe III that I even tried to buy the import version. But even with a converter it won't work on my machine, because the game only works through a Scart port. It's driving me mad!

Also, do you know where I can get hold of an old Atari Tempest coin-op?

Darren Payne, Oxford

STEVE:Sega won't be releasing Golden Axe III in this country — basically, because it's so completely crap. So, unless someone else picks up the rights, it's never likely to see a UK release. As for a Tempest machine, try to get hold of a copy of Coin Slot magazine from your newsagent. It's a trade-only paper, but features loads of second-hand machines for sale.

TATTOO

Dear Steve

Here are some intriguing questions for you.

1. Do you think the Mega-CD version of Mortal Kombat will be arcade perfect?
2. And the same about Mortal 2?
3. What do you think of Doctor Who? I think it's a magnificent wonder of the world.
4. What do you think was the best Dalek story ever? Remembrance Of The Daleks, perhaps?
5. Since 32-bit is outdated already, do you think Sega would be wise to scrap the Saturn and go straight for the top with a 64-bit machine instead?
6. 16 plus 16 are 32, right? Then why did you say that the Megadrive and Mega-CD together aren't a 32-bit machine?

Cardinal Biggles, The Comfy Chair

STEVE:1. Nope. Basically, it's the Megadrive game with a handful of digitised scenes bolted on for good measure. 2. It's look very nice, but it'll never be arcade perfect. It's close, though. 3. I think it's an excellent programme — and long overdue for a return. But not via the Americans. 4. Nah, I prefer Genesis. 5. Not really. After all, it doesn't matter if there's a 128-bit machine out there — if the software for it's crap, then all that power is wasted. Look at the Jaguar stuff so far, and you'll see that it's all effect and very little in terms of playability. 6. Doh! So if I had ten 8-bit computers, I'd have an 80-bit machine would I? The chips inside the machines decide on the machine's size. The Megadrive and Mega-CD are both 16-bit, but the two chips do not combine its power. After all, just because the Saturn has two 32-bit chips doesn't make it a 64-bit machine.

ANCHOR

Dear Steve

1. When is Street Fighter II coming out on the Master System?
2. When is the mag going to review Aladdin on the Master System?
3. There aren't that many good two-player games for the Master System. What ones do you recommend?
4. Also when will your mag review Road Rash and Ecco for the Master System?

Marlon Kameka, London

STEVE: In a word: never. 2. Last month. 3. Micro Machines is a goodie and so is Masters Of Combat, and that's about it! 4. Road Rash we've already done, and the Master System version of Ecco is still in development limbo.

STORK SB

Dear Steve

Could you please answer some questions for me.



1. In Super Street Fighter, where do Fei Long, T Hawk, Cammy and Dee-Jay come into the game?
2. Do you have any of those Panini SEGA Super Play cards? If you do, can you please send me some as you can't get them in Australia.
3. If you can't, can you please tell me when they will be available in Australia?
4. I own a Master System, so can you please tell me the best games which are coming out? Road Runner and Robocop Vs

Terminator both look pretty cool.
5. Why did you stop Lookback? I really liked it.
6. Why did you also stop putting in those Mega-CD cards that came with the metal tin?
7. Who does the illustrations for Mean Yob, and the pictures of you and the other reviewers?
Matthew Lanham, Gilmore, Australia
STEVE: 1. They're just yer average, run-of-the-mill, Joe Ordinary fighters. They pop up between the 'old' characters as the game progresses. 2. Sorry, mucker, they went like hot Mr Kiplings. 3. As far as we know, they won't, but fingers crossed. 4. Micro Machines is a bit smart, Road Rash is quite a laugh, and Streets Of Rage II wasn't too bad. 5. It got a little dull. It may return in an updated kind of way, but it won't be so long-winded if it does. 6. It was only ever going to be a limited set, that's why. 7. A guy called Patrick Rose did the pics for Q&A and Paul's Tips, but the character heads on the comment boxes are the handywork of Mr Sheep-Worrier himself, Gary Harrod (who's adopted a really sickening habit of ringing his Fiance and making cooing noises down the phone to her...).



LESLIE CROWTHER

Dear Steve
Please could you use your great knowledge to answer my questions.
1. Will the arcade games Tumblepop and Sega Sonic come out for the Megadrive?
2. Will VR be as excellent for the Megadrive as it is in the arcades?
3. On Sonic 3, can you play as Knuckles in the one-player mode?
4. When Sega sell a Megadrive with Aladdin, how long does the offer last for?
5. Can you give me some advice? Which is the best out of SF2, NHLPA '94, Sonic 3, Aladdin, or John Madden '94? Please list them from best to worst.
Andrew McHardy, Wendover Dean
STEVE:1. They probably won't, but the Sonic coin-op is Saturn-bound. 2. It's too early to say. 3. Nope. 4. As Confucius say: 'Until Stocks Last.' 5. SF2, Sonic 3, Aladdin, NHLPA, and Madden'.

INTENSIVE CARE

Dear Steve
Please would you answer these damn fine questions.
1. In SF2, what does the red fireball do?
2. When do you get the names of the people who produced SF2?
3. Do you think I should save up for a Mega-CD or wait for the Saturn?
4. My friend says that Psygnosis have found a way to put more colours on screen for the Megadrive. Is this true?
5. When will Sega stop producing the first Mega-CD unit?
6. Is it true that Sega are going to release two versions of the Saturn: one CD only, the other CD and cartridge?
Tim Hall, Borehamwood
STEVE:1. It's actually a bug, but in Super Street Fighter, Ryu can use it to burn his opponents. 2. When you complete the game on Normal. 3. You've got ages to wait for the Saturn, but I'd wait a little just to see how good the next wave of CD software is. 4. Nope. They palette switch like most other developers (to double the colours they can use), but they can't actually add more colours. 5. There's loads left at the mo, so it won't be for a while. 6. As we understand it, the machine will have CD and cartridge ports.

VASELINE

Dear Steve
Could you please answer my five questions.
1. Are there going to be special 24 and 32-Meg versions of Sonic 3. If so, how much will they cost?
2. When will Rebel Assault be out for the Mega-CD?
3. Will Fatal Fury 2 be any challenge to Street Fighter 2?
4. How powerful will Super Street Fighter be on the Megadrive?
5. Will there be a sequel to Jungle Strike?
Jon Anderson, Barkingside
STEVE:1. Details of the 24-Meg version are sketchy, but be patient. 2. JVC, the game's developers, don't have a Sega licence. It'll be on import in a month or so, but a UK release has yet to be set. 3. Doubt it, I thought the first one was really crap, and the sequel doesn't look much better. 4. There's no news yet, but I'd hazard a guess at 24-Meg. 5. There's one in the pipeline, but it's only on EA's drawing board at the mo.

LONDON'S BURNING

Dear Steve
Could you answer these questions please.
1. Is Street Fighter 2 coming out for the Master System?
2. Are there any cheats to make Mortal Kombat harder, as I can complete it easily on every level?
3. How many levels are there in Populous? On the box it says 5000, but I can get to level 5050.
Graeme Dowie, Scotland
STEVE:1. Not a snowball's chance in hell. 2. Nope. 3. After the 5000th, they start repeating themselves at random.

HEY DIDDLE DIDDLE

Dear Steve
Please can you answer my questions about Megadrive games.
1. Are there any horse racing games planned? If so, when?
2. Which is the best Wrestling game available?
3. Are there any card games available - Especially Bridge?
Carl Smith, Wirral
STEVE:1. No. 2. WWF. 3. No — it's cheaper to buy a pack!

Another month over, and time to oil those head stabilisers. I would go for a walk in the park, but all the passers-by think I'm one of those old Penny Bikes and try to sit on my shoulder. Ah well, until next month then...

Windswept at Wentworth

The Championship Course at Wentworth is difficult enough when you're facing the greats of European golf. Sevé, Woosie, Sandy... the gang's all here. But PGA European Tour also offers a very British challenge – the weather. Not only will the wind dump a perfect drive in the drink, but rain can see to it that the only birdies on the course are ducks. And if you hit standing water as you're putting for the Tournament on the 18th green, the only way the ball's going down is if you attach water wings and float it in.

PGA European Tour perfectly recreates the challenges of professional tour golf – tricky ball lies, wicked weather, and every blade of grass on 5 of Europe's top courses. Test your nerve on 90 holes in 5 game modes, 2 of which are brand new. Hone your skills with a Practice round, play a Tournament against 60 European Tour pros, or take the Skins Challenge with a pot of dosh at the end of every hole. And now there's Matchplay and the Canon Shoot-Out too, where a single slice can put you back in the club house.

Tour Europe with EA SPORTS – if it's on the PGA European Tour, it's in the game.





if it's in the GAME, it's in the GAME™

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ELECTRONIC ARTS

EA DIRECT

PAUL'S TIPS



Well it's the month of May everyone, and what a very merry time I'm having! David 'Rik' Meakin from Bowthorpe has written to tell me he fancies Lucy, only veiling his pathetic muse with a sad list of geriatric cheats; and the usual surreal phone-calls continue to twist my brain. As if this wasn't enough, my washing machine is kaput and I'm forced to wash all my clothes in the bath! It's irrelevant, I know, but so is much of the information I'm subjected to each month from lovelorn lame players like David Meakin. Still, the cool contributors remain, thank goodness, with Ed Lomas back on form and Mat Miller and Herdy coming up with the goods once more. However, it's a newcomer named Matty who we love the most this month, thanks to his awesome Castlevania cheat. Think you can do better? Well, how is anyone supposed to know if you don't get it printed?! Send your most respectable efforts to: I LOVE OZ, JUST BECAUSE, TIPS, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON. EC1R 3AU.

Castlevania



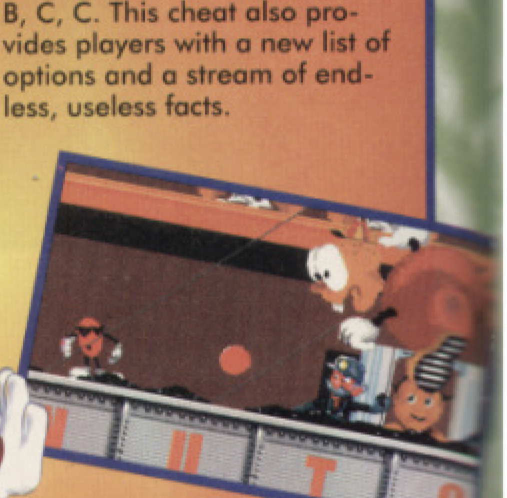
Matty 'Jim' Reed from Stepney has abandoned his wellies for a month to bring us this prize winning tip. It's for Konami's excellent Castlevania game and goes like this: press UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN , LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, B, A whilst on the title screen. Not only does it provide players with a stage select, but thirty lives are on offer and the collision detection is switched off! Incredible, Matty, you cockney werewolf wrestler!





Cool Spot

You can't believe everything you read, but James Tweed is convinced that Dave Perry rears his creative head when this sequence of buttons is pressed whilst the option screen is displayed: A, A, B, B, C, C, C, C, B, B, A, A, A, A, B, B, C, C. This cheat also provides players with a new list of options and a stream of endless, useless facts.

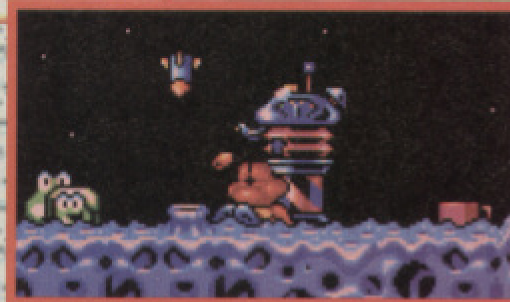












JAMES POND 3

Wild sea-horses couldn't stop me from printing this invaluable cheat, for Ed 'Pinky' Lomas from Rochester, after playing the game non-stop for four days, has discovered 'the ultimate password'! The code starts the indomitable fishy hero with 97 levels cleared, all agents rescued,all cheese mines destroyed, three Stiltonium machines destroyed and five lost treasures recovered. James also has six lives and each time he restarts is in possession of the maximum five energy units. The password is: **Blue Skull, Red Moon, Red Moon, Red UFO, Green Rocket, Yellow Cake, Red Star, Blue Hand, Red Moon, Yellow Bottle, Red Book, Green Heart, Green Mushroom, Yellow Dog, Red Fish, Blue Mushroom, Red Boot, Red Fish, Blue Sweet and Red Pick.** This is more like the menu from a Chinese take-away, Ed! With this password, James starts on the 'Lair of the Mush-Beast' level. The final boss is reached from here by leading him to the top-right area of the map, exiting from the 'Neopolitan Peninsula'. By using the spring shoes to bounce up high just to the left of the exit James collects a Secret Level icon. Upon leaving the level the final, boss stage is opened.

Ed has also noticed something funny on the password screen. By leaving James alone for roughly three minutes, a little mouse walks on screen to give the cheese pointer a hug. When the cheese is moved the mouse looks really angry and chases after it! Thank you very much for all that information Ed. You're a, er... a brick!

Micro Machines

Would you believe it? There's actually another person in the world who's as crazy about Micro Machines as Rad Automatic! His name is Thomas Hulme and he lives in West Sussex. So crazy is he that Thomas has devised a way of extending two-player races to nine laps. First of all select a head-to-head race with the Sports Cars — NOT the Pro Sports Cars. Now start the race slowly, ensuring that both drivers keep their cars side by side. Follow the track around to the left where both cars leap over the gap with the file ramp. Follow the track around to the blue hook and left through the two chicanes. This leads the cars onto the ruler bridge and over to the red file, seen on the right-hand side. Both drivers must slow their cars down and turn right past the red file; up past the note pad and further on until the file ramp is reached again. Stop here, because now its gets interesting (I flippin' hope so Thomas!). Once lined up with the road to the file ramp reverse both cars across the table until they cross the race track horizontally at the bottom of the screen. The number of laps changes from three to four. Now this, Thomas assures the world, is the fun part: Drive both cars forwards and have them jump the file ramp together, going round the circuit once more and repeating the whole trick mentioned above once more, all the while increasing the number of laps each time, to a maximum of nine.

FIFA INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

Blimey! It's a bit difficult telling one FIFA tip from another, as most of them go on about scoring goals at some point in the proceedings. It's a nightmare! Chris Morris from Bonnyrigg has this tactic to cast before the goal-starved stands. In any of the one-player modes, join the computer team on the control set up and start the game. Immediately after kick off simply lead one of the computer team's players straight down to its own goal and score. It's as simple as that!



MEGADRIVE

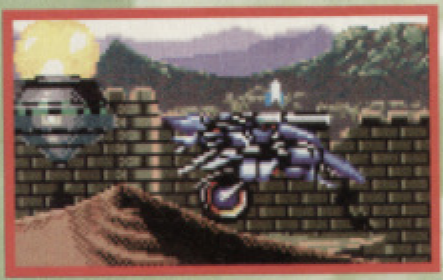
GENERAL CHAOS



OH DEAR! here's one that slipped through EA's stringent play-testing net! It's a cheat discovered by Mat Miller and Herdy (surprise, surprise) and it allows players to win merely by selecting an entire team of 'chuckers'. Apparently, pausing the game after prompting one of the chuckers to launch a grenade suspends everything bar the fast-approaching explosive itself. Frozen enemies are helpless against this!

RANGER-X

The general tactic employed throughout Sega's breath-taking Ranger X is caution. However, to give players more time to work things out here's Mat Miller and Herdy's cheat to play the game in slow motion. Press START to pause the game then UP, DOWN, UP, DOWN, UP, DOWN, C, B, A, RIGHT and LEFT. The music restarts indicating that the cheat is up and running. By pressing the A button at this point and hitting a fire button or choosing a direction to guide Ranger X with the D-pad, everything on screen moves incredibly slo-owly. Get things back to normal simply by pressing START once more.



ROBOCOP VS TERMINATOR

Officer Scott 'Akira' Tarrant from the Clapham division has these pieces of advice for Officer Murphy — AKA Robocop: At the beginning of the OCP Offices stage, jump left into the wall where a hidden room is discovered. Continue walking left and go through the door next to the flashing arrow (try opening the door first!). Now continue walking left until you reach a wall. Walk through the wall and push up. You are instantly transported to the secret room. Secondly there is a secret remote base located in the Underground Complex stage. At the start of the level descend the first ladder approached from the right. Go left and take the first ladder down. Now walk right to the next ladder and go up. Continue travelling right and take the next ladder down. At the bottom, travel left towards the wall and jump left, through it. Continue left and take up the plasma rifle found there and pass through the door. This takes you to the secret remote base. Got it?'

ROCKET KNIGHT ADVENTURES

Whilst everybody is busily trying to clock Rocket Knight Adventures on Very Hard mode it is worth knowing that there is a Crazy Hard mode, too! Christian Bassos from Sydney, Australia writes that pressing LEFT four times, RIGHT four times, LEFT seven times, RIGHT once and LEFT once at the Konami logo causes Sparkster to die instantly from just one collision! What's more he is only given one chance to complete the game - no extra lives and no continues!

MEGA-CD

LETHAL ENFORCERS

Though this may seem a little obvious, there are doubtless many players who fail to realise Mat Miller and Herdy's winning tactic for Lethal Enforcers. When confronting the boss hoodlums, concentrate all fire on their offensive weapons. Not only does this prevent any projectiles from coming the player's way but causes damage to the bad guys in the process. Obvious, eh?

ROBO ALESTE

Just like Capcom and Konami; TOHO is a company worth keeping an eye out for in the news. Their shoot 'em up titles are incredible! Matt Miller and Herdy have this level select cheat for one of TOHO's best — Robo Aleste. Whilst on the option screen, set the sound to 3A, the difficulty level to hard, and the CD-DA number to the stage number of your choice. Now press B and START simultaneously. Upon returning to the title screen a continue option is discovered from where it is possible to select any stage!

SONIC CD

Toot! Toot! Sonic Waa-rrior! Here's a stage select for Sonic CD, supplied by the prolific Mat Miller and Herdy team. Whilst viewing the title screen, press UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT then B. A ringing noise coupled with a flash of the screen prepares for the arrival of a stage select, accessed from the title screen. Of course a cheat so cool as this isn't without its limitations — Sonic may only explore the stage selected, and is restricted from carrying on through the rest of the game by some terrible Robotnik gizmo or another! Poo!



GAME GEAR

SPIDERMAN

Bobby Buck, who sounds like a comic book artist, has this brilliant tip for Game Gear Spiderman. In Electro's key room have Spidey drop down to the left-hand side of the area. He discovers a Game Gear near the electrocuters which, once collected, entertains Peter with a game of Pac-Man the next time he returns home. Simply press Button II to switch the game on.

MASTER SYSTEM

FANTASY ZONE

This one's from Bobby Buck from Berkshire. Allow all the attract sequences to run their course, and when the story screen appears press UP then DOWN, alternately about fifty times. It's kind of pot luck, really but when the cheat is working the first time an extra life is purchased from a shop it only costs one thousand creds, and buying all the engine parts in existence rewards players with infinite time for their weapons.

LAND OF ILLUSION

Another of Bobby Buck's tips offers a well-hidden extra life. The first time Mickey visits the lake, ignore the treasure chest found in the pit (the one with the fish swimming in it). The next time Mickey passes this way as he journeys towards the Shrinking Caverns, collect the treasure chest and he is honoured with an extra life! Alakazam!

DRAGON'S LAIR

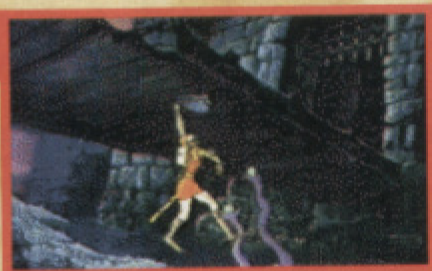
Forsooth, such a timely and useful guide this very is. Dragon's Lair, that most faithful conversion of arcade to Mega-CD is now out, and a solution for aspiring knights is sorely needed. This guide is balm for the arcade, Mega-CD and future 3DO adventures.



KEY

- S — Sword
- L — Left
- R — Right
- U — Up
- D — Down

DRAWBRIDGE



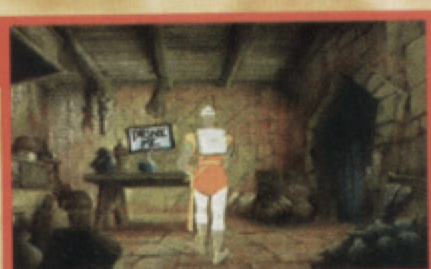
When Dirk falls down, S, then U whilst in the middle of his swing.

THREE DOOR ROOM



Simply R when the floor starts to collapse.

DRINK ME



Just R as the bottle flashes.

TENTACLE ROOM



S as the tentacle descends, then U, R, D and L in succession. Finally U when the door slams.

CAULDRON ROOM



U immediately, then S as Dirk picks up the bottle. S again when the smoke monster appears. R at the last moment.

SNAKE ROOM

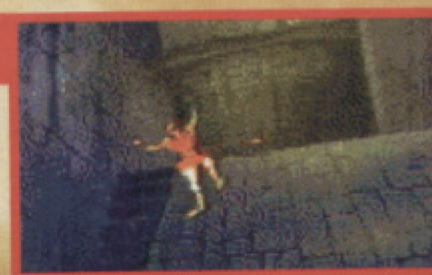
Press S twice for the first two snakes, then R.

THRONE ROOM



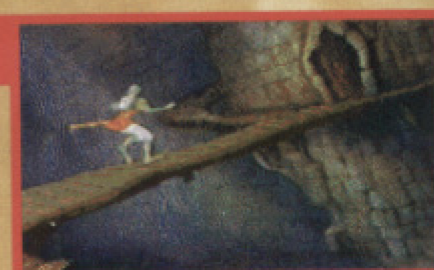
R, U and R to escape the electricity. Move R when the throne stops rotating.

PIT



Move L, but only as the floor collapses. S almost immediately, and L. L at the far end.

WALKWAY



U twice. S to fend off bats, then R immediately twice.

FLYING HORSE



This room changes in each game by the screen flicking the image. Use the correct sequence by checking the first move you make: either L, R, L, R, R or R, L, R, L, L.

WALL ROOM



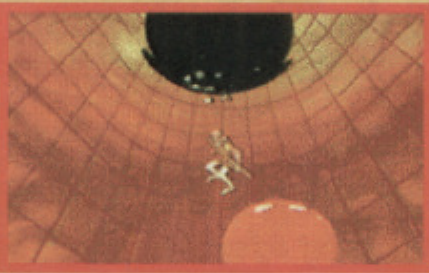
Just U as the wall builds.

BLACK KNIGHT



Like 'Flying Horse' this room features image switching. Either L, R, U, R, L, R, L, U, S and S; Or: R, L, U, L, R, L, R, U, S and S.

BALL CANYON



Puzzling, this one, and requires timing. When the ball in front of you moves across your path, press D. Wait for the next one and repeat. After the last one (purple) push U to leap the final gap.

BAT STAIRS



S first, then L to keep on the floor. L again as you walk down the stairs, and S when you come to the door. L to walk through.

GIDDY GOONS



S when the first goon appears, then R immediately. U briskly then S for the second set of goons.

BLACKSMITH'S



Little bit of image-switching. S for the sword and Mace as they begin to descend, then R or L to avoid the anvil. S for the spear and S to parry the statue.

LIZARD KING



Complex, this one. L, then R at the end of corridor. R again three more times. When the pot and sword come into view, U, S, L, R, D and S in quick succession.

CRYPT



When Daphne appears, press U. Quickly S to fend off bones, then U and S again. U, then L or R to avoid slime. In the chamber, one final S.

PADDLES



This tricky room depends on timing. Dirk moves up to behind the paddles and his breathing becomes audible, first slow, then fast. Aim to push U when he breathes quickly for the second time. Now S and D. U to escape the evil thorns.

COLLAPSING TILES



Wait for the fire to ignite then D and quickly U. Choose the escape door by pressing L.

HORSEMAN



L when the cackling horseman appears, and L again on his second approach. Then R and R again to escape down the hole.

BURNING ROOM



Move R as the first fire ignites, then D and U in quick succession. L to avoid singed ankles and L again to reveal the exit.

MUD MEN



Wait until the mud men start to surround you then S. When the scene changes with the geyser behind you, U. There are five more U moves, each comes when the scene is shown from a different angle.

ELECTRIC CORRIDOR



U when the power is turned on, and U through the serrated door. When you mount the bridge, L.

UNDERGROUND RIVER



In 'Ye Rapids' press U when you move into the centre of each channel. In 'Ye whirlpools' simply steer in the opposite direction to the whirlpool. When the crate explodes, press R twice quickly to grab the chain.

THE DRAGON'S LAIR



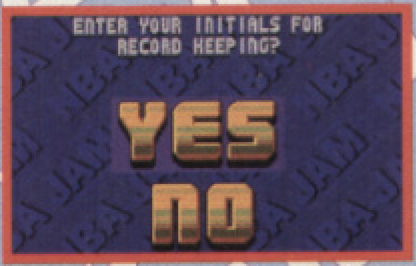
First, when the pile wobbles, U to steady it. Then L twice to avoid dragon fire. D to steady the pile. When chased behind the pillar, D, D and L quite sharply, then U as Singe lumbers behind. D to run from the second pillar, and R. Wait until you stand in front of the sword, then S and L quickly. S to parry the fire, then wait again until you and Singe are facing off. L, then S and S again to deal the death blow. Congratulations.

NBA JAM

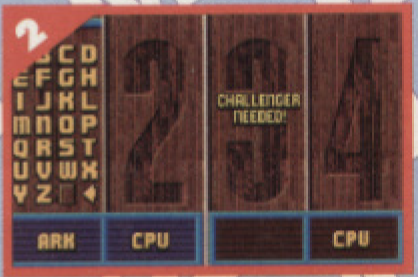
It takes one hell of a tip to get us excited these days, but the occasion of Acclaim's NBA Jam has caused a mini-frisson. Following our contact with Paul Shotton of Stoke-on-Trent, we present a feast of hidden cheats for this brand-new basketball game. Paul will be well rewarded with some choice CDs from our vault.

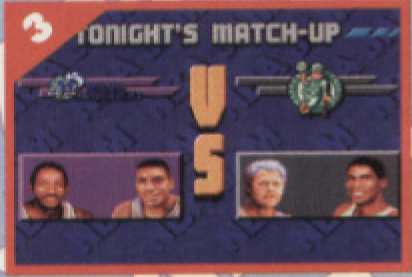
BOOM!

This cheat introduces a range of oddball characters into the game, including America's scandal-ridden President, Bill Clinton and his running mate Al Gore. There are also a couple of shifty types, who are probably the programmers. Activating it is simple:



1. Select 'Yes' to enter your initials.
2. Enter the first two initials of the following characters. Put the cursor over the third initial, but DON'T enter it.
3. Hold down START and the corresponding button for that character.





CHARACTER	INITIAL	BUTTON
Bill Clinton	ARK	A
Al Gore	NET	B
Turmell	MJT	A
Riveit	RJR	B
Divita	SAL	C
Air	Dog	A
Chow	CAR	C

This is not an exhaustive list. Other characters remain to be found, including Michael Jordan. Call us in confidence if you make a discovery.

SHAKA!

These two power-up cheats give you an advantage. The first gives you an unlimited supply of Turbo power. On 'Tonight's Match Up' screen, press A, B or C five times, then hold A, B and C until the court appears. 'Power Up Turbo' appears over your players.

Cheat 2 is for extra hard defence. Again, the 'Tonight's Match Up' screen is the key. Press A,B or C four times on it, then hold down those same three buttons until the court appears. 'Power Up DEF' appears over your players, signifying increased ability.

LAKA!

This cheat puts the game into a special 'Juice Mode' which plays at high speed. On the 'Tonight's Match Up' screen, press any button thirteen times, then hold the B and C buttons until the game screen appears. Before the tip-off, the word 'Juice' should appear to let you know the cheat has worked.

BUT WHERE'S HILARY?

Paul adds that you can play any number of Clintons (or other characters) if everyone does the cheat together on the initials and match up screen. So a four-way Presidential Jam is possible.





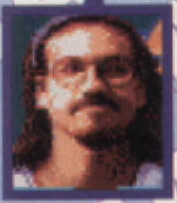
ENOUGH, ALREADY!



Some exclusive NBA Jam tips of our own now! First a selection of initials we recommend you experiment with, using the same method as the character cheat shown above; SL(space); TWG; JMC; JWH; JRN; GMP; WIL; SNO; HOW; TON



Now a fiddle that brings a shot percentage meter into the game. On the infamous 'Tonight's Match Up' screen press any button once, then hold A and B until the game begins.








Mars
CHOCOLATE
IS REALLY THICK
AS ARE FOOTBALL
HOOLIGANS
WHO HAVE BIG MOUTHS
AS DO LITTLE BROTHERS
AND SISTERS
WHO GET YOU INTO TROUBLE
AS DOES DRINKING
WHICH ANNOYS
YOUR PARENTS
AS CAN
YOUR EXAM RESULTS
D
WHICH CAN BE
EMBARRASSING
AS CAN
BUYING CONDOMS
WHICH COME IN 3'S
AS DO BUSES
WHICH LEAVE YOU OUT IN THE COLD
AS DOES
BEING STOOD UP
WHICH CAN HAPPEN
TO ANYONE
AS CAN DANDRUFF
WHICH IS A COMMON COMPLAINT
AS IS
"YOUR ROOM'S A TIP"
WHICH CAN GET BORING...
BORING...
BORING
AS CAN AN EARLY NIGHT
WHICH HELPS YOU
WORK REST AND PLAY
AS DO
Mars
BARS.

V.R. Virtua Racing

1-2 PLAYERS | **16 MEG**

GAME TYPE
DRIVING

PRICE £70+

BY SEGA

RELEASE JUNE

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: NONE
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: EXCELLENT
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
RANK 15th

ORIGIN
Based on the phenomenal Sega coin-op, Virtua Racing is the first game to feature the Sega Virtual Processor.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
Race against 15 computer-controlled competitors to be first round the three courses. Your times are saved to the battery back-up for eternal glory.

MEGA GAME

Speed. What pitiful attempts we have accepted as computer game representations of one of life's truly great sensations. Speed. There's nothing quite so *dangerous*. Sprite games create speed by drawing a long flat road. Then they place a tiny tree sprite beside the road. Then they place a slightly bigger one further along the road. Then an even bigger one. You think the tree is getting closer, and you are going faster. Speed.

Now let us redefine computerised speed. Instead of a cartoon illusion based on sprites, let's have a DSP do all the complex calculations necessary to create a virtual environment. Your car is a virtual object in the virtual environment. It really 'moves' through the polygon world. You can observe this movement from any position in the polygon world: from in the car, from the air, as a virtual spectator in the virtual stadium beside the track. Now that's real speed — Virtual speed — Virtua Racing.





VANTAGE POINTS

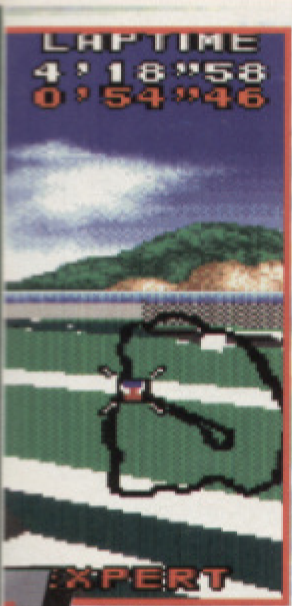
In Virtua Racing you soon become acquainted with the remarkable freedom of vision you have. In common with its arcade parent, there are four separate views. Switching between these is immediate, and can be done as often as you wish within a game. You'll discover different uses for each of these positions:



DRIVER'S EYES
This position is what a virtual driver would see. Your hands are shown on the steering column, responding to your commands, and the front wheels are clearly visible spinning. This position gives the most exhilarating sense of speed, the lowest slung view and the greatest control response.



CHASE VIEW
From a position to the rear of your car's aerofoil. In this position you see more of the road, by removing the car's chassis. It has a distinct advantage when the car crashes, as the view doesn't spin confusingly. The viewing height is still quite low. This is the default viewing position at the start of the race.





SHORT CIRCUITED

There are three tracks. This may not seem much, when other racing games offer the entire Grand Prix season, but put it in perspective. Firstly, it's a faithful representation of the arcade game. Secondly, each of the three tracks is very distinctive, with landscape features. You feel as if you are driving around bends, not just reacting to a series of kinks in the road. There is a clear distinction in difficulty between the tracks

tua Racing





Thumbnail maps of the three glorious courses. Every bend, bridge and skidmark in mini-pixel format.



ELEVATION

Moving away from the car, position three is distinctly to the rear and above the car. Your placing within the race is much more apparent. This view is useful when contemplating manoeuvres like overtaking or planning bends. You are more likely to play from here when learning the three courses.



PANORAMA

Perhaps the most spectacular position to view Virtua from. The bird's-eye view let's you see far in advance, especially handy when chasing the race leaders. The downside is a reduced sense of movement, as the car is so far away! Also, from this distance the car seems to handle strangely.

FOREST

The first course is by far the easiest, with no sharp corners. It's characterised by a long opening/home straight, flanked by a large stadium. After the first smooth bend to the right, there's a two-stage cantilever bridge. After that comes two reasonably tight chicanes and the mid-checkpoint. The second part of the course has a wide grass verges and some hum-dinger bends, but the animated amusement park is impressive.



ACROPOLIS

Someone should reconsider labelling this as 'Rocky Mountain Way', as the main feature is a huge, steep canyon, that turns racing into a winding art-form. There are areas to let rip, like the scenic stretch by the shoreline. At the end of that cruise is a hideous, almost right-angled bend (the programmers could have invested in a few road signs). Worse is to come, with a U-bend that requires one of the few speed adjustments needed in the game.



GOLDEN GATE

The most impressive feature of this course has to be the huge suspension bridge that dominates the opening. It really is a magnificent feat of (silicon) engineering. It also allows you to pick up real speed before passing through the only tunnel found in the game. From the checkpoint, you'll find roadworks forcing you to stick to the right. The two flyovers make this a hard course to play from the panorama viewpoint.



Virtua Racing

VIRTUA INFO
ORIGINS

Virtua Racing appeared in the arcades in December 1992. It was the first work of Sega's Virtual team, which had devised a system capable of handling 8,000 polygons per second. Sega were taking on Namco, the only other established source of polygon arcade games (Starblade, Galaxian 3, Cyber Sled, etc.). Since the original model 1, Sega have developed Model 2 for Virtua Fighter (October 1993) and Virtua Star Wars (Spring 1994).They also have Model 3 with texture-mapping for Daytona Racing (Spring 1994) which will be a quantum leap beyond Virtua Racing. There is now also a Virtua Formula set-up with four hydraulic formula one cars playing on a projection video wall, with a separate 'live highlights' screen with virtual commentator, Virt McPolygon.



▲ *Daytona is Sega's next leap forward in the arcades. It's astounding.*

VIRTUA INFO
ROLE REVERSAL

Play the Free Run mode, and you may set the lap limits and time constraint. You can turn and drive up the track in the opposite direction. Why you might want to do this perverse act is anyone's guess, but at least it's on offer.

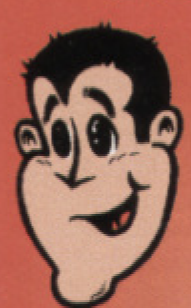


▲ *It's the M5 turnoff at Blackpool.*





COMMENT



GUS

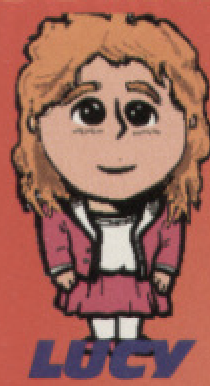
There are two worlds to Virtua Racing. The virtual world is fantastic: an incredible achievement in graphics for the Megadrive that produces images of such speed and detail that I can safely say you won't have experienced anything like it on a 16-bit console. The faithfulness of the conversion really silences all the critics who doubted if anything remotely playable would come out. And the additional two-player mode is such a fabulous extra (although I do prefer one-player). The SVP is not just a gimmick, it gives you a whole new, tactile playing experience. But there's another world we cannot ignore — the real one. The planned £70+ price tag on this game is pretty painful — the sort of burden only NEO GEO owners are used to bearing. No game is worth this price, when that sort of money could buy so much else instead. But we are a games magazine, I am a gamesplayer, and I have to salute Virtua Racing as a Megadrive classic.



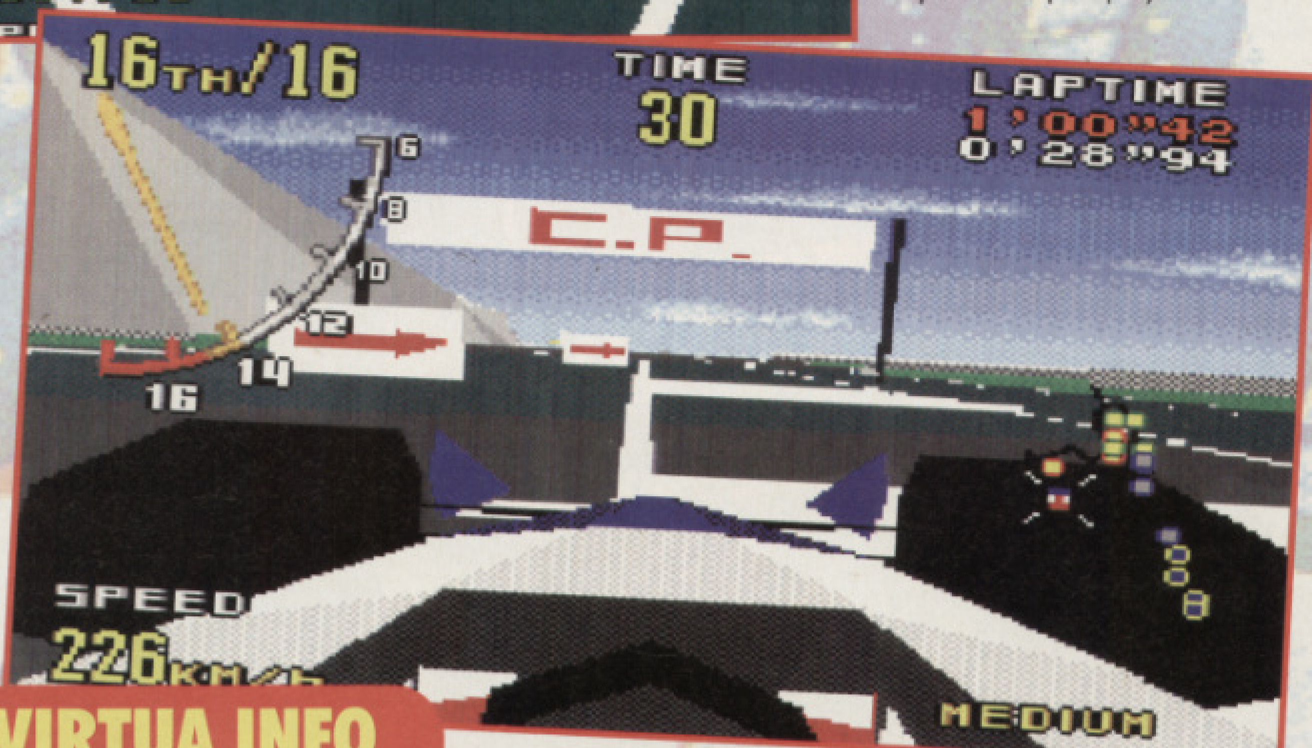
TAKING SOME STICK

Options features both Automatic and Manual transmission. Unsurprisingly, Automatic is easier to drive at first, as gear changes are one less thing to worry about. However, automatics waste potential in matching optimum gear/speed, leaving the seven speed manual option open for expert players.

COMMENT



Yes this game looks phenomenal — graphically nothing ever seen before on the Megadrive can compare with the polygon-based backgrounds, which, despite the hexagonal wheels and angular everything else, give a real feeling of *being there* and an incomparable sense of heady speed, perfectly converted from the arcades. The sound is also pretty topper — certainly better than the strangulated insect sounds of the likes of F-1 and yes, after the initial difficulty in getting into the controls, Virtua plays like a dream. BUT (and it is a big but) there are some big downers which lead me to believe that this game doesn't warrant a Megagame (the final scores are the average between mine and Gus's assessments). First up, a Sega source confirmed that it's not going to come out for much less than £70 — no game is worth that amount of cash, no matter how good it is. Secondly, okay you've got automatic and manual gears to master but the fact remains it's still only got three courses which although tough and will doubtless provide a few days of unadulterated fun doesn't bode well on the lastability front. Finally, the two-player mode is just one-on-one with no computer-operated opponents which gets dull very quickly. Gus is right, this is doubtless a classic and a programming triumph. But I wouldn't buy it.



VIRTUA INFO
POWER PROCESSING

The remarkable polygons are created using the new Sega Virtual Processor, which also bumps up the cost of the cart. The following technical information may be double Dutch, but basically shows the SVP has a very speedy processor; the ability to handle three times the amount of polygons as Nintendo's Super FX with more interrupts (windows to allow the programmers the chance to do other things); and the intriguing possibilities of using the SVP for sound. (Data — Sega).

CHIP COMMAND TYPE:
DSP, 1 command 1 clock
SPEED/INSTRUCTION PER SECOND:
23 MHz (23 MIPS)
ROM:
I-RAM (Instruction RAM) 2048 bytes
POLYGONS PER SECOND:
300 - 500 polygons (16 colours) with 4 interrupts
RAM:
D-RAM can be installed
SOUND EXPANSION:
2 CHANNELS PWM
DATA BUS WIDTH:
Internal/external: 16 bits



▲ *Yoiks! You spin out of control.*

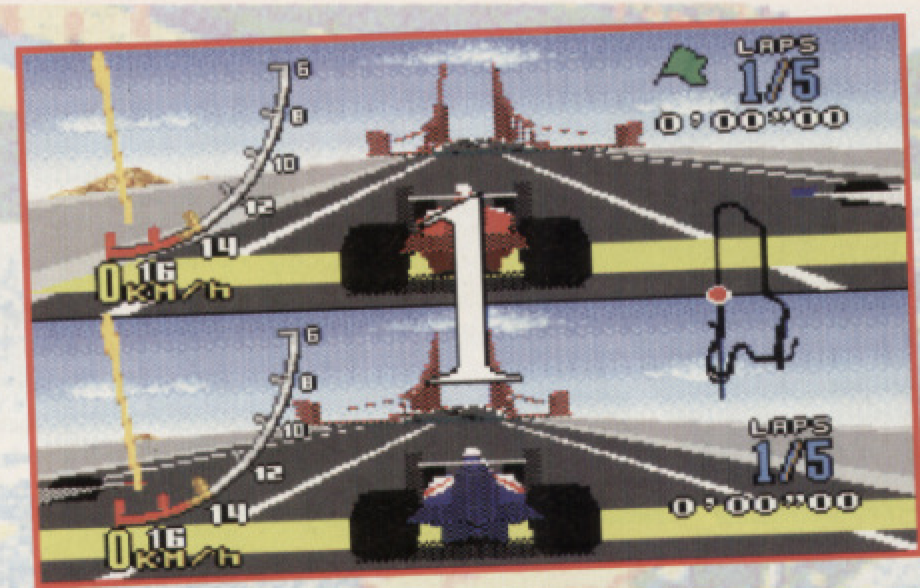
FOUR TIMES FOUR EYES

There are sixteen racers in all, each displaying a degree of tenacity in the race. Other drivers aren't just obstacles to be neatly passed, but display marked intelligence, with cutting-up manoeuvres, tight cornering and taking advantage of any slips you have. Each one is traced on the spinning course map to the right. You are also playing against a diminishing time limit.



TWO TIMES TWO EYES

There is a two-player option utilising a split-screen display. Only the two human racers are on the track for the race, and there is a choice of laps and five-stage handicap facility for players of unequal ability. This options shows no major loss of game speed, but the display is slightly harder to follow and some detail has been removed from the course scenery.





AGAIN

There is a reward for victory. See the race replayed in Instant Replay mode. This shows the entire race, but from a series of vantage points. Scroll past a treacherous bend, see your car zoom past from a spectator's viewpoint by the track. It's similar to the eye-catching demo that fronts the game.





▲ *Live scores of various League matches flash up as you play. (fib)*



GRAPHICS 97

▲ Unique. A vast, viewable polygon environment that makes this a racing game like no other.

SOUND 90

▲ All the incidental music of the original. Great speech and FX — the cars rushing past, for instance.

PLAYABILITY 92

▲ Furiously playable unlike any other Megadrive game. A feeling of real opposition from the 15 other racers.

LASTABILITY 86

▲ The two-player option lends life to the game.

▼ There are only three courses, each is quite short.

VFM 85

▲ The staggering price tag sadly puts this game out of the reach of many.

OVERALL 90

If you have this sort of money to spare, Virtua Racing is an absolute must buy. A next generation title.



1
PLAYERS

GAME TYPE
ADVENTURE

PRICE £39.99

BY EA

RELEASE JUNE

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: PASSWORD
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: VERY SLOW
GAME DIFFICULTY: HARD

1ST DAY SCORE
REACH WORLD FOUR

ORIGIN
Ported across from Bullfrog's original Amiga game, with elements added to the cart version ported to the CD.

GAME BREAKDOWN


GAME AIM
Conquer each of the 195 worlds by crushing all resistance in your path.

POWE

Great tyrants we have known and loved: Alexander the Great — Greek commander who conquered half the known world 500 years before Christ; Attila the Hun — uninhibited roisterer of the Dark Ages, who had Europe quaking in its hamlets; Prince Vlad — Balkan-esque oppressor, the bulwark of Christian Europe against the Moor, who liked to impale his victims.

Notice the trend? They are all from antiquity, when people wore wool not nylon, and battle was generally done with a large pointy stick, not a sophisticated fire-arm. A few people have tried to resurrect the fad for tyranny in the modern era, but their efforts (Adolf Hitler, Mussolini, Idi Amin) have generally been less than well received. But Electronic Arts realise there is a potential market niche for tyrants. So they've produced this handy CD, to allow you to dominate in private to your heart's content, without offending the general public.







AERIAL ULTRA
A new feature added to the game is the aerial sortie of each of the 195 worlds. The fractal flight is impressive in itself, but even more so when you realise it's a faithful 3D representation of the level you are about to enter, showing hills, towns and towers. However, apart from lending atmosphere, it doesn't interact with the game at all.









RMONGER



RAPE, PILLAGE, PLUNDER

Whichever way you approach it, conquest is an unpleasant business. First you have to convert a town to your side. The icon for this symbolises attack, but the result depends crucially on the posture you adopt. The townspeople will resist or succumb depending on loyalty to their present leader. Once a town is yours its people, food and items are at your disposal. You can adopt three postures: passive, neutral and aggressive. Your posture affects the way your Captain performs every action in the game.



▲ The villagers gather for the annual pie-eating contest.



THIS IS THE CAPTAIN OF YOUR SHIP — CALLING

Orders are given via the icon bar running along the bottom of the screen, and executed by your captain. You start off with one captain, standing behind the main map. His band's numbers and food level are shown along with his personal health. There are other captains to find and subordinate throughout the worlds. With control of these, you can coordinate actions: create a foraging party and an attacking party, for instance.

COMMENT

It's been twelve issues since I first saw this — both I and the game are a year older.

PAUL

Personally, I think I've aged better. The extra presentation features are barely noticeable save for the impressive, but irrelevant aerial feature. The animated intro is brief by Calvin Klein proportions, most of the time is taken up by loading. The game itself is the same sluggish, strategy game that lacks excitement or focus. It seems even slower, and the delay in the command interface makes it a chore to play. So many annoying things happen — like troops deserting at the drop of a hat, forcing you to trudge around the settlements recruiting them again. By no means an essential strategy game for any interested Mega-CD owners.





▲ Great Comic Ancestor Moments In History No 1: How the royal court laughed at the little man's jesting. "Arise, Sir Bobby of Ball," said the Queen.



▲ "Hey, Porthos, look at that utterly crap screenshot below us..."





DESKTOP TIDY

The CD version has had a minor renovation in the screen presentation department. The positioning of the windows has been changed. The action centres on the main window, which depicts the world from an isometric viewpoint. The commands for this are the same, letting you zoom in, rotate and scroll around the world. A new feature is the key map, which gives a reconnaissance breakdown of the world, showing buildings, people and terrain. The command icons have been moved also.





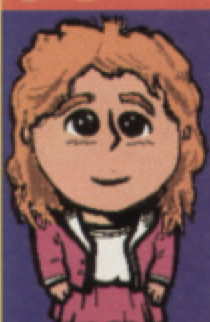
TOOLS

Larger settlements have workshops where goods may be produced. These are easily put to your advantage. Just what the town produces depends on certain factors: proximity to wood, altitude, proximity to water, presence of fishermen or merchants, and posture. By varying these, you get goods as diverse as bows, pikes, ploughs, cannons and boats. The weapons give you a distinct advantage in battle.





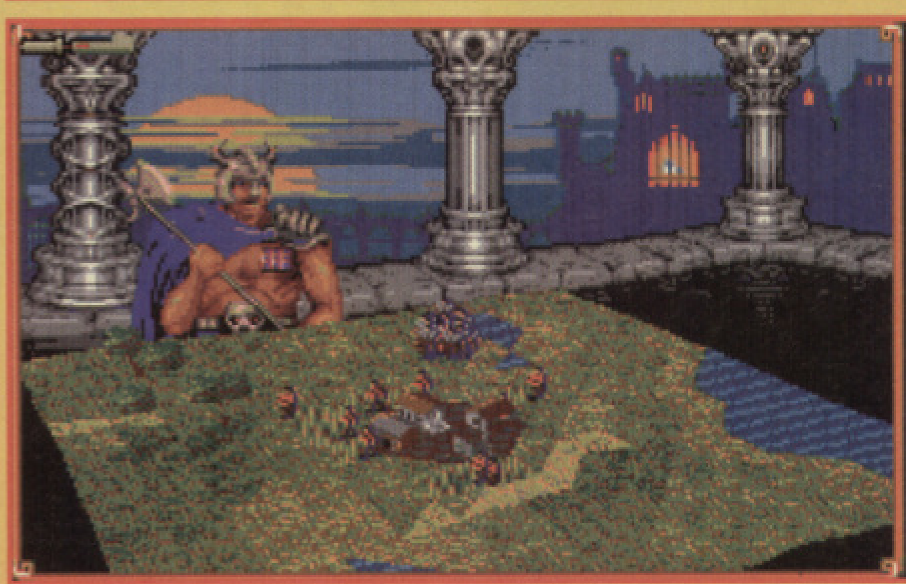
COMMENT



LUCY

Powermonger on the CD is a classic case of too little too late. It's more than a year since we saw the original cart version and apart from a few presentational frills and slightly better sounds (especially the birdie noises) there's not a lot of difference. If anything, Powermonger CD is even slower than the cart version. There are loads of levels so you're Ok on the lastability front, and it's cheaper than the Megadrive version so for diehard strategy fans this might be worth a look but us lesser mortals won't be too impressed.





GRAPHICS — 73

▲The scaling and rotation are okay, icons and clear, and the aerial sequences are nice.
▼The game is drab, and essential detail is often midget sized.

SOUND — 65

▲Nice intro music, sounding like a big budget production. Lovely bird noises.
▼No in-game music, and no speech in the story sections — although the mouths move!

PLAYABILITY — 72

▲Your objectives are well set out. There's a fair range of commands.
▼The game's very slow. Annoying things happen with regularity.

LASTABILITY — 76

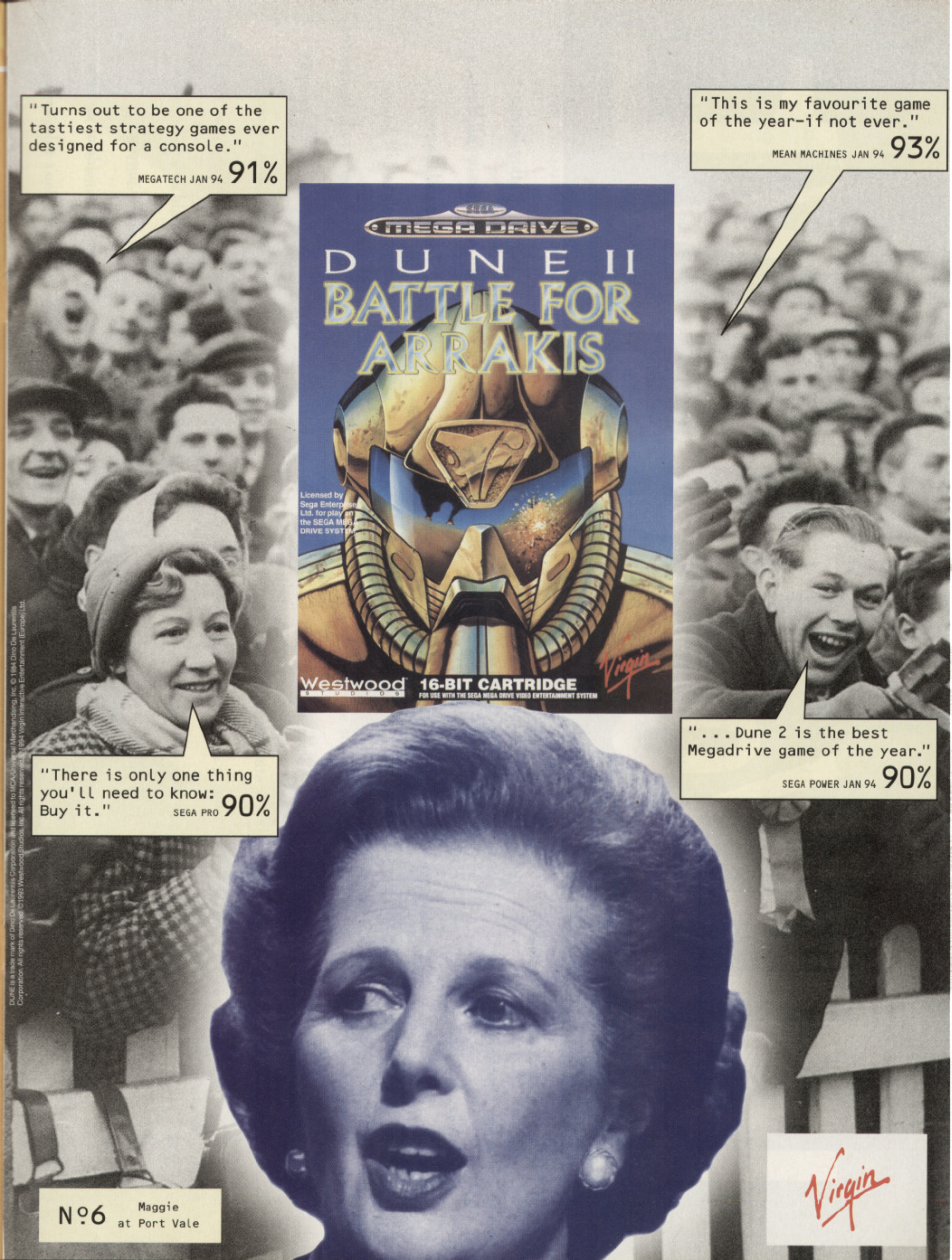
▲195 worlds: You can't really complain on the game length side.
▼As the game progresses, tedium creeps in after a short stint of playing.

VFM — 84

▲Less money than the Megadrive — but with more features.
▼The game is already a year old on Sega formats.

OVERALL — 74

More of an ordeal than it should be. Powermonger will doubtless by enjoyed by die-hard strategists/ megalomaniacs, but not many others.


"Turns out to be one of the tastiest strategy games ever designed for a console."
MEGATECH JAN 94 91%
"This is my favourite game of the year-if not ever."
MEAN MACHINES JAN 94 93%
SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
DUNE II
BATTLE FOR ARRAKIS
Licensed by Sega Enterprises Ltd. for play on the SEGA MEGA DRIVE SYSTEM
Westwood STUDIOS
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGA DRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
Virgin
"There is only one thing you'll need to know: Buy it."
SEGA PRO 90%
"...Dune 2 is the best Megadrive game of the year."
SEGA POWER JAN 94 90%
Nº6
Maggie at Port Vale
Virgin

100% ALIVE

Pick up someone else's litter

Send your mum some flowers

Strip right down to your underwear

Go for a run around the block

Tune your radio to Kiss and pull the knob off

Believe in yourself

Eat a pineapple

Write the alphabet backwards

Meet an old friend you haven't seen for years

Make a record

Dance the dance electric

Plant a tree

Phone someone you love

Learn a second language

Every day at the same time stop and think about something wonderful

Go and see Ryan Giggs

Get your nipple pierced

Ring 071 700 3100 and tell London something it needs to know

Play football in the street

Give £100 to a down and out

Make a statement

Order an empty skip and leave it outside your house for a week

Learn something new every day

Throw away your watch

Laugh

Take a picture of your back

Go for a day without speaking

Say a prayer every night

Have a day without TV

Read a page from a book by Charles Dickens

Hug someone of the same sex

Put your change into a bottle for a year and give it to charity

Visit Great Ormond Street Hospital

Go to the market and spend 10p

Help someone today

Wear a wig

Make everyone at work a cup of tea

Take a friend to the zoo

Write to Mother Teresa

Turn your radio up full blast

Teach a child to read

Buy a book on Jeff Koons

Stare at the clouds for a full ten minutes

Buy Marvin Gaye's 'What's going on'

Tell someone a secret

Begin something you've always wanted to begin

Talk to a child about the future

Think purple

Wallpaper the inside of your car

Go on holiday and don't take any luggage

TUNE TO 100FM, CLOSE YOUR EYES, STICK A PIN IN THIS PAGE AND DO IT.

Give up your seat on the tube every day
Take a bath in milk
Climb a tree
Watch 'It's a wonderful life'
Get on a bus you never got on before
Drink a glass of water
Clean your ears
Dream for the day
Visit New York
Listen to Jazzie B's next show
Get up an hour earlier tomorrow
Do 100 press-ups
Eat something you've never tried before
Ride a Merry-go-round
Say hello to a policeman
Spend an hour in a place of worship
Send someone a telegram
Put your sofa in the kitchen
Go to a museum

Get on a bus you've never been on before
Dance in the front garden
Shave your head
Feed the birds
Visit an art gallery
Write a poem
Feed someone else's meter
Carry a flower all day
Paint your toe-nails
Take your granny to the movies
Stop saying no for a whole week
Put on a dress
Write to your MP
Make a wish
Go home a different way every night for a week
Learn to listen more
Sing a song at the top of your voice
Help a stranger with their shopping
Write a fairy-tale

Croon to your partner under a full moon
Do a jigsaw puzzle
Get your hair cut
Dance in the rain
Fast for a day
Buy a hat
Use a fountain pen
Walk home today
Feed the dog
Invite your neighbour to tea
Give your favourite possession away
Memorise a Woody Allen joke
Tell the truth for a day
Scream
Put the kettle on
Take up knitting
Listen to Rodigan's next show, in the park
Spend an afternoon speculating on how to make a million
Forgive someone

Say yes for a day
Put your name on a star
Stop someone getting AIDS
Learn to fly
Do a cartwheel
Tell someone your dreams
Walk on the grass
Make a million pounds
Talk about God with a friend
Wink at someone ugly
Buy the next record you hear on Kiss
Buy your boss a present
Tell someone you appreciate what they do
Buy a friend your favourite book
Tune into Caesar tomorrow morning at 4am
Photocopy this ad and get someone else to do it
Only boil as much water as you need
Learn a new word every day
Do one thing to make the world a better place to live

Kiss 100fm



1 PLAYER

16 MEG

GAME TYPE
SHOOT 'EM UP

PRICE £49.99

BY SEGA

RELEASE JUNE

OPTIONS

CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: EXCELLENT
GAME DIFFICULTY: HARD

1ST DAY SCORE
123,000

ORIGIN

The distant origin of Subterrania lies in an arcade game called Gravitar (1983).

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM

Complete each of the nine missions by accomplishing strategic tasks and destroying emplacements.



Hello, Judith Hann here, inviting you to take a look at Tomorrow's World, on the show that predicts what our future lives will look like. Now, we're all used to the familiar sight of coal miners coming up on their funny lifts with dirty faces, but what will mining be like in the twenty second century?

Well, in fact, but that time all the miners on earth will have been sacked, and important minerals will be mined from the moons of the solar system, since the home planet will be deemed much too precious to despoil for materials. Miners will uncover elements like this plastic model molecule here, which I'm now going to pull a bit off and stick here. But it's very probable that space aliens will be flying about in ships looking much like this Deluxe Paint IV drawing here, and they'll get very angry and invade the mining moons.

If that happens we surmise that Earth will send a crack team of underground troops to liberate the mining installations and kick those alien asses. We've constructed a possible simulation of the whole event on this Megadrive game here, which I'm going to attempt to play on air, even though it probably won't work. And now, the water-powered car.







SPECIFIC GRAVITY

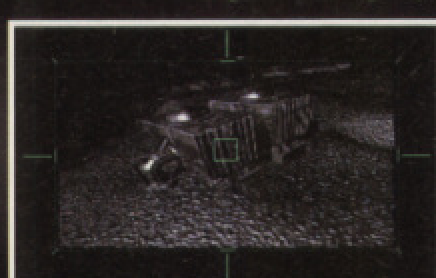
The most involving aspect of Subterrania is its control method. Gravity and inertia are elements rarely programmed into a game, as they require lots of extra calculations. They make control a struggle initially, but in the long term they give the game a better feel and add satisfaction.

Gravity is the force pulling objects towards earth. Without propulsion, the Sub craft falls. Normally, objects accelerate under gravity, but in Subterrania the ship falls at a fixed rate. The effects of Gravity depends on weight, so when the craft carries objects, it requires extra propulsion.

Inertia is the force that moves objects without propulsion, as they decelerate. The craft will not stop instantly, so movements have to be made carefully. There is a retro thruster (firing opposite to the main one) to stabilise the ship.

▼ *Aliens approaching mining central....sensros detect incoming fire...emergency! emergency!....crackle fzzzt glurk!*











COMMENT



GUS

There's something very manicured about this game that makes it a pleasure to play. The German programmers have used their particular national efficiency to produce a sharp, instinctive shoot 'em up with excellent handling and real innovation. The graphics aren't spectacular but by the same token cannot be criticised, and the music is Depeche Mode, while being curiously reminiscent of classic C64 music by the likes of Martin Galway. The only spot of mildew on this blooming blaster is the amount of levels. I understand there are only nine. I admit I haven't completed, but I'd be happier if I knew there was tons of new discoveries to make, not just a few more extremely lethal levels.

KNOTSLANDER

We don't do these 'collect 'em up' lists very often in Mean Machines now, so as a special treat, here's a parade of the bonus icons. Come on you beauties...

FUEL



Considering the rate this depletes, you can never afford to be far from one of these. The ship must have the same petrol tank as a Reliant Robin.

SHIELD



Few and far between, but these total force-field replenishers are welcome all the same.

POWER-UP



These cylinders change through three colour-coded forms. Red is best, by common consent, though the green homing shot has its uses.

SUB-MODULE



There is one of these on each of the first six levels, allowing you to travel underwater from level seven onward.

MISSILES

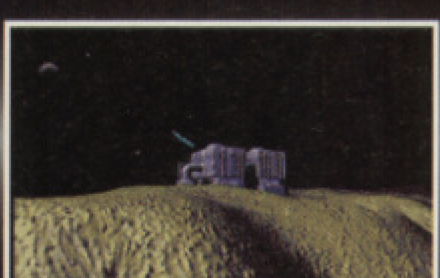


A limited supply of extremely powerful warheads. Just the ticket for the big nasties.

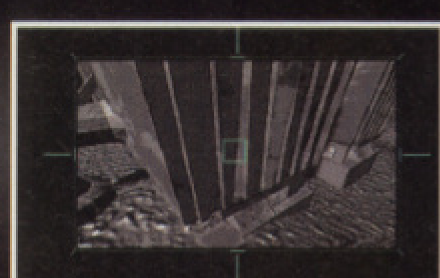
EXTRA LIFE



Really doesn't require any further clarification, but please don't shoot them.









COMMENT



STEVE

What a smart update of a real blast from the past. The idea behind this may not be new, but Sega's enhanced Gravita is a supremely playable blast. Subterrania requires genuine skill as you work your way through its tortuous levels, and the control method is extremely simple yet completely effective. However, the real key to the game's success comes from its missions. Gone are the Gravita days of simplistic missions. In Subterrania, mirrors need positioning, bosses are there to be defeated, and prisoners await rescue. Granted, it may not look up to much, but Sega have a real winner here and I hope it gets the credit it so richly deserves.

SCANDROID

Each mission has a briefing, by way of a Satscan. This device shows you a layout of the cavern, and a printout of the multiple objectives. The Satscan starts as a basic module, but is refined as you progress into the game. Soon you get more precise directions and Infra-Red spy pics of hazards. It really pays to watch the briefing closely, as some levels take a bit of working out.





▲ *This bit looks like Infra-Red Lemmings*



CAVERNCLUB

We've selected levels two and three to give you an idea of how the game is strung together. The detailed and specific method to completion means strategy plays as much a part as dexterity.

LEVEL 2





3. Climb onto the top magnetic rail, and use it as a vantage point to destroy the alien boss.



4. With bossy smouldering, collect the sub-module and POWs. Get the extra life from the left-hand chamber before returning to the landing point.



1. The first aim is to pick up the weapon power-up at the bottom of the main chamber. Approach from the left to avoid the bouncing critter.

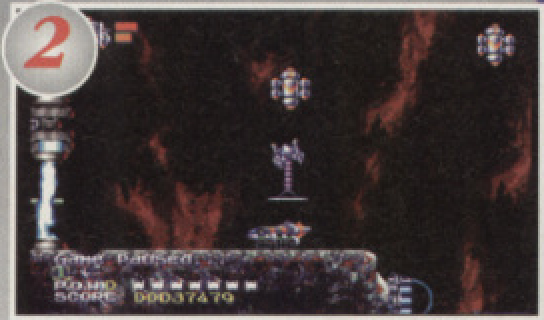


2. Blast the door to the right-hand bottom chamber. There's a set of missiles here, which prove handy.

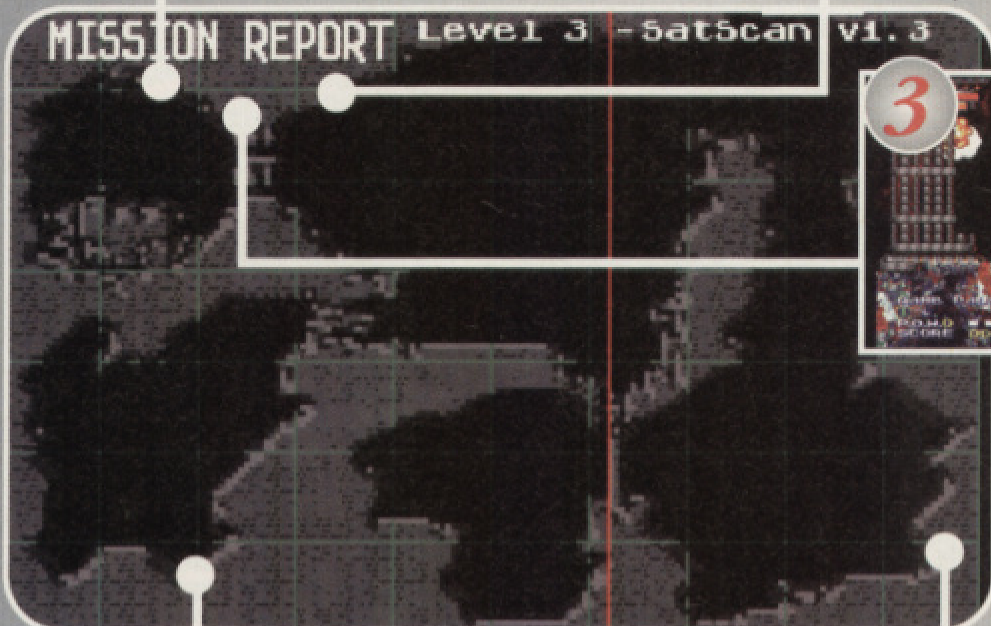
LEVEL 3



4. The next mirror is lying beneath all this techno debris. Hint: Its use becomes clear upon reflection.



2. Take it back to the laser-room. Select 'deflector' from the weapon menu and drop it as near to the mobile unit as you can. Now land on the pad that opens the beam barrier below.





3. There's another mirror to collect (you must need fuel by now, surely?). The tricky part is suspending this mirror above the first one, redirecting the laser-fire to your advantage.



5. And everything else you want is in here.



1. Like the best magic, it's all done with mirrors. Go down the long shaft to collect the first.







SCHOOL OF MOTORING

It's a thoughtful idea for a game with a novel control system to have a trainer, and Subterrania does. Nothing fancy mind, but enough to get you through your test.

GRAPHICS 85

▲Very well defined graphics for the ship and icons, and nicely constructed cavern backdrops.
▼Nothing stunning or technically ground-breaking.

SOUND 89

▲Wonderful futuristic effects and superb music, especially on the Satscan screen.

PLAYABILITY 94

▲An almost flawless conception of what gameplay is. The most developed playability since Gunstar Heroes.
▼Fuel consumption is slightly annoying

LASTABILITY 84

▲Very hard later levels and multiple tasks throughout.
▼The scope for this game could have been a lot greater than is presented here.

VFM 87

▲All game, no frills and excellent fun.
▼For the 16-meg price, you basically expect more levels.

OVERALL 91

An addition to the list of Megadrive classics, albeit a minor one for reasons of size. Who said that doesn't matter?



1 PLAYER | **4 MEG**

GAME TYPE
PUZZLE

PRICE £39.99

BY REALTEC

RELEASE IMPORT

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES:3
SKILL LEVELS: ONE
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
REACHED LEVEL 3

ORIGIN
This game takes its roots from the age-old fun fair amusement hammer games.

GAME BREAKDOWN



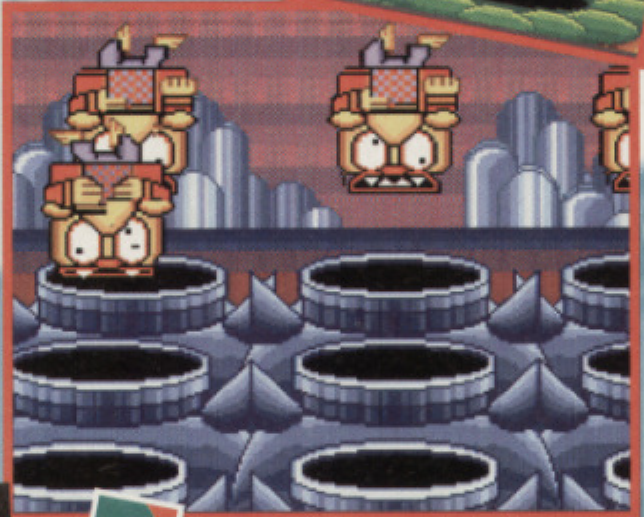
GAME AIM
Batter the seven shades out of all the heinous henchmen as they pop their heads out of holes.

MALLET LEGEND

Back to Basics — it was a fiasco for John Major but can it work with video gaming? You tend to find that new things tend to be a variation on an old idea. Mallet Legend is no exception. Most of you probably remember those hilarious features at fun fairs — the ones where you had to bash as many furry creatures or frog-type specimens as possible with a hammer before the y reached the finish line in order to notch up points and ultimately prizes. It is upon this ancient and undoubtedly fun concept that Mallet Legend is based with a dose of Test Your Strength mechanisations thrown in for good measure.

The game is based around the dubious storyline of an evil monster kidnapping the really, really ugly Princess Philia and her mouth-wateringly beautiful little dog (okay, so I lied, but I'm so sick of gorgeous Princesses). The aforementioned beastie has stuffed Her sweetness (and the Princess) down a bloody great hole and set his brainless henchmen to guard the nine possible exits. You as the beau of Her Knickerless are duty-bound to wield your trusty mallet and brain the those damned giffords as they poke their heads out of the holes over six manic levels..









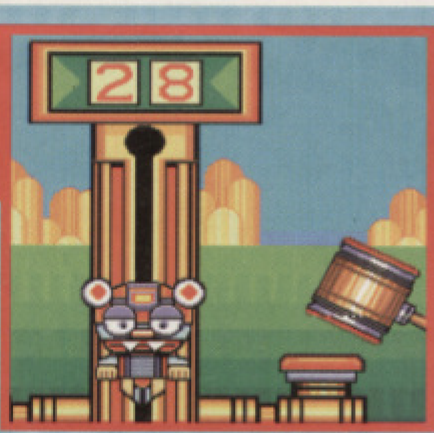
DOG DODGING



The main problem with Mallet Legend is that , being a plucky pair, her Sex-on-legsness (and the Princess) keep trying to make a dash for freedom so while your reflexes are going like the clappers, bashing anything that shows its face, you have to avoid the death-defying duo or suffer a loss of points and ultimately a dead Princess and Game Over screen.



BONUS BASEMENT



The progressively tough levels are interspersed with bonus stages similar to the Test Your Strength fun fair features. Basically it's just a matter of frantic button-pressing in order to hit the top bell with in the time limit.

GOING DOWN A BOMB



As well as the mutant barf-balls who pop up at alarming speeds, there's also a series of bombs which, when battered with your mallet, explode and blow up everything and everybody on screen.

COMMENT



GUS

I have my suspicions that many people in console game 'marketing' haven't a clue about games themselves. If they do, how can they blithely license platform game clone after platform game clone and overlook Mallet Legend. It's a fabulous idea, and rather than fudge the control method by using the joypad, they've gone and designed a special controller! The game is admittedly very simple (and I found a bit too traumatic at times). But the potential for people making fools of themselves is enormous, making this one of the most fun games of the year. And as distribution in the country is exclusive, you could be shelling out for a limited edition item. Certainly for those in search of something new.

COMMENT



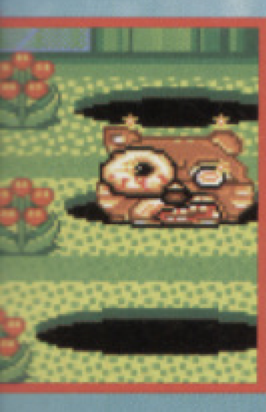
LUCY

We've reached a point in the world of Megadrive gaming when anything new has got to be good. Here at MEAN MACHINES we have neither the time nor the inclination to count the number of cack Sonic clones and mediocre Street Fighter II rip-offs being churned out by countless software companies but we can tell you it's a lot. Hundreds probably. So when the curious Mallet Legend arrived in the office we were intruiged to say the least. To say the game is basic is a gross understatement with only just functional graphics and mediocre sound but by gum it's fun! There's something so satisfying about battering all those fiends from hell and to push your reflexes to the absolute limit is very exhilarating. I was certainly glued to this game for three days solid (very unusual for me) and for novelty value and value for money you can't fault it. As a party piece it'll be a corker but on the down side I doubt it will have very long-lasting appeal for just one person.



CHEERS TO

Mucho thanks go to the ever-helpful George from Ice Distribution for the loan of this cart. ICE have exclusive handling of Mallet Legend in the UK, so this is where to get it. Whether your a trade peep or just an interested punter you can give him a buzz on 0302 340079 or fax him on 0302 752 064.





IT'S HAMMER TIME!

As you may have gathered, Mallet Legend doesn't work with a normal three-button joypad. Instead, included in the bargain £39.99 package comes an add-on joypad with nine gaudy yellow buttons which correspond with the nine holes on the screen. Get pressing!

GRAPHICS — 74

▲Nothing special but functional for this type of game. The beasties are nicely drawn.

SOUND — 72

▲Adequate tunes which accelerate with the action.
▼The battering noises aren't as satisfying as they could be.

PLAYABILITY — 84

▲Really easy to get into and very addictive initially.
▼The saminess of the gameplay might get dull after a while.

LASTABILITY — 76

▲Six tough levels which get ever-harder as you progress.
▼It may lose appeal quite quickly for lone players.

VFM — 90

▲The £39.99 price point for the cart and the nine-key pad is very attractive.

OVERALL — 79

A true novelty game which'll make a great party piece but it's a bit basic and samey for lasting lone player appeal.



1 PLAYER

GAME TYPE
ADVENTURE

PRICE £49.99

BY SEGA

RELEASE APRIL

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: SAVE GAME
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: SLOW
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
SAVE ONE EGG

ORIGIN
Where have you been? Only based on the biggest grossing movie in history. Also, elements of Crichton's original novel have been added.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
Rescue at least one egg from each of the seven species before the time-limit expires.

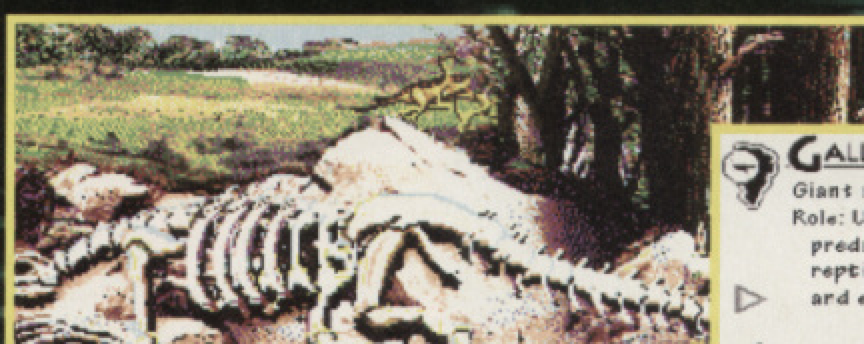
JURASSIC PARK

When a license like Jurassic Park offers itself, console owners can usually expect a dreadful series of generic platform games strewn across every system known to man. But in the case of Speilberg's cinematic gem, the opposite has happened. The Megadrive, Game Gear and now Mega-CD have each been given original treatments (and the Nintendo formats had a completely different gamestyle). This tardy Mega-CD version — coming some nine months after the film's theatrical release — is definitely the most innovative. But is it the best?

The setting of Isla Nublar, Hammond's genetic dinosaur theme park is returned to, with you not as Dr. Grant, but some unknown agent charged with saving at least one egg from each of the seven species on the island (there were 16 species in the book, but who's quibbling). Most of the mission is played in real-time, with a strict limit of completing the mission before the sun goes down or it's you who's heading for extinction.

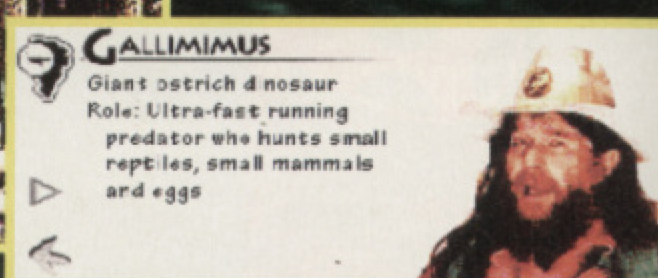
Tricky situations No. 115 Wounded Triceratops.





This dino had a bone to pick with you. Now you pick his.

Dr. Jim Bakker, who inspired some of Crichton's novel, offers tuppence worth of useless info.



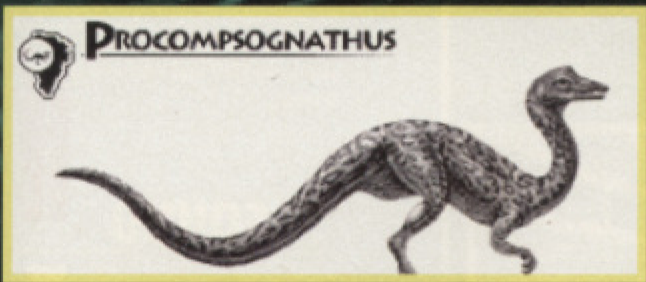
THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY

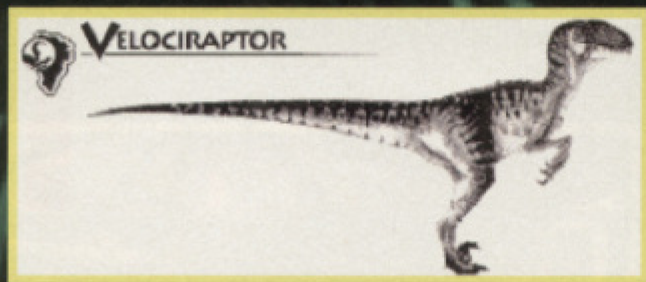
You view the park in the first-person, with a panoramic view of certain locations on the island. All your commands are performed with a point-and-click interface, shown as a cross-hair which roams the screen (just like Monkey Island). Moving to new locations is possible when the cross-hair turns to an arrow. The symbol also changes to a glass when there's something you can look at more closely; and a hand when there's something to be manipulated.

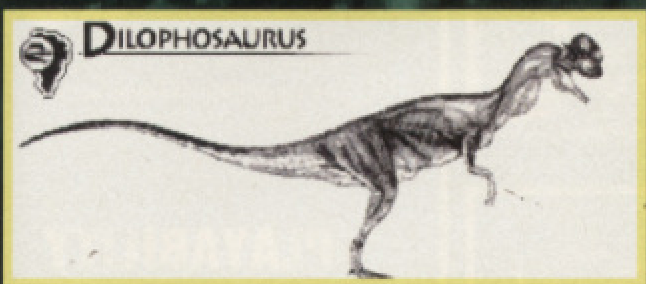


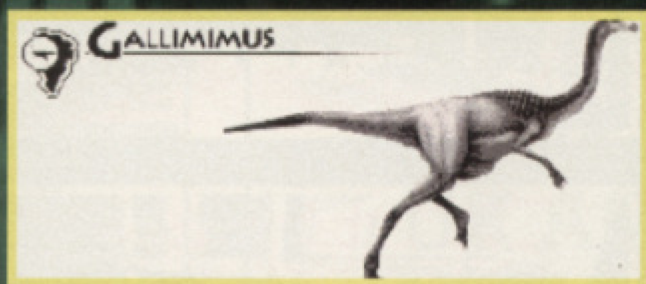
SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES

Unsurprisingly, there are live dinosaurs on the island. Velociraptors, Dilophosaurs and the T-Rex are potential dangers. Even Triceratops is enraged by careless actions. Using the motion tracker and learning each animal's distinctive sounds will extend your life expectancy.













COMMENT



GUS

While commending Jurassic CD's innovations, it's not the earth-shattering release many of us Mega-CD owners were hoping it would be. The presentational ideas, like the control room, Dr. Bakker's dino-tour and the sweeping motion in the Visitor Centre are impressive, but thinly disguise the remainder of the game — a dull exploration game comprising of finding item A and taking it to point B. Whereas the dinosaurs may have added a frisson of excitement, I found they just got in the way of the task in hand, and I was irritated, not terrified by the umpteenth 'raptor attack. For Jurassic-heads, the atmosphere may be enough to carry this, but only maybe.





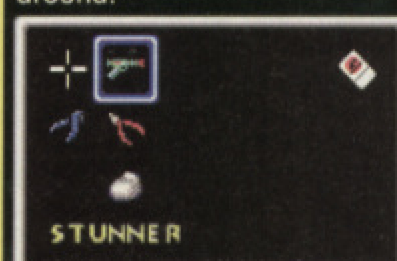
▲ *I though these Galli's were meant to be nice: bloomin' vicious if you asl me.*



◄ *Your contact on the mainland. You can 'log-in' anytime, darlin'*

PLIERS, CUTTERS, FORCEPS...

You have a box inventory to hold some twenty or so items (excluding the eggs you find). Many of these are cutting instruments to allow access past security measures. Some measures need a more hi-tech approach, via the colour-coded security cards dotted around.







ALTERNATIVELY

MONKEY ISLAND
The best point and click adventure for the Mega-CD, with tons of humour and a huge amount of gameplay.



DRACULA UNLEASHED
More movie atmosphere, with similar item/clue based gameplay to Jurassic Park.



COMMENT

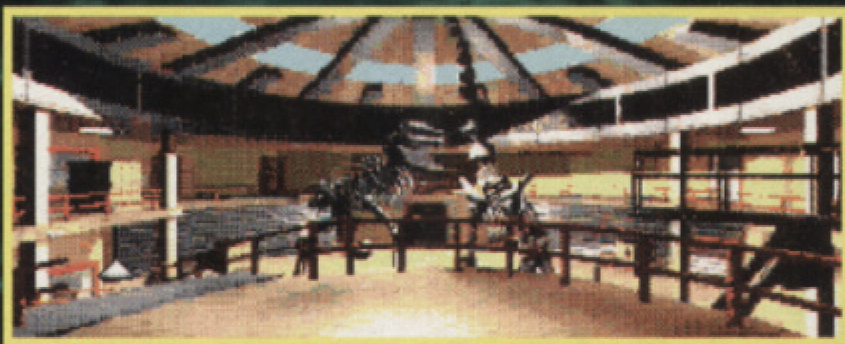


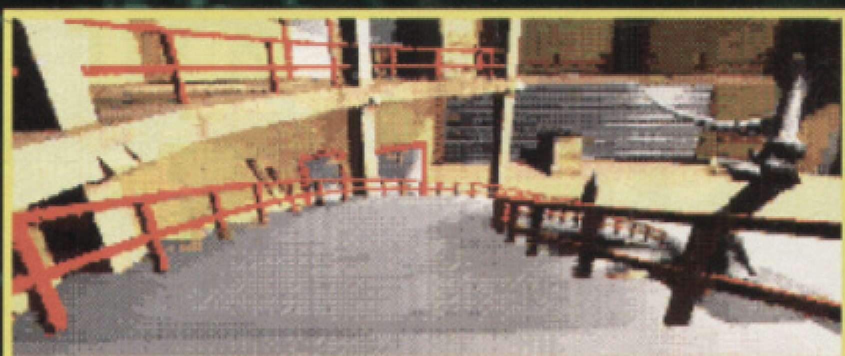
STEVE

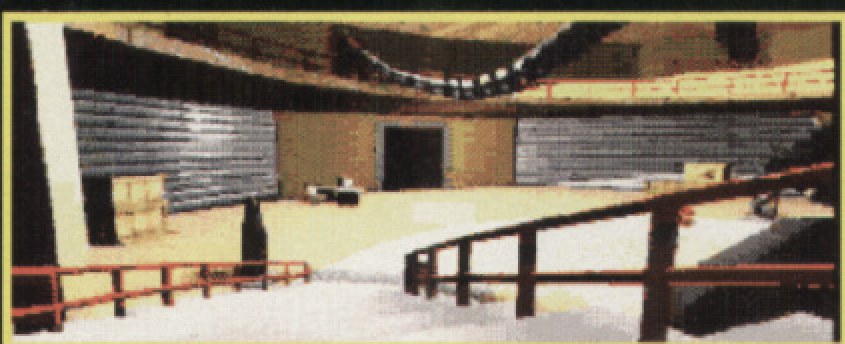
I had such high hopes for the CD version of Jurassic Park, so this comes a real letdown. It's nice that Sega have tried to do something different with the licence — and the initial impressions given by the detailed play area are very good — but behind the well-presented front-end lies a very simplistic game. For the most part, the puzzle element in Jurassic CD simply requires the player to take any objects they find to rather obvious locations. Yes, there's the odd dinosaur to be seen, but there's never any real feeling of menace generated — one of the film's strongest points. The potential for a dino blockbuster was fantastic, but this is another missed opportunity to add to the list.

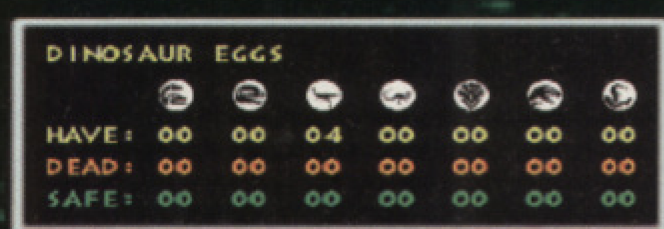
JUST KEEP ON MOVIN'

The game uses the vaunted Cinepak FMV system to create animated segments like those seen walking through the visitor centre. When you walk between areas, or look at the pre-filmed dino-info kiosks you are treated to the usual Mega-CD jerky-movie fare.







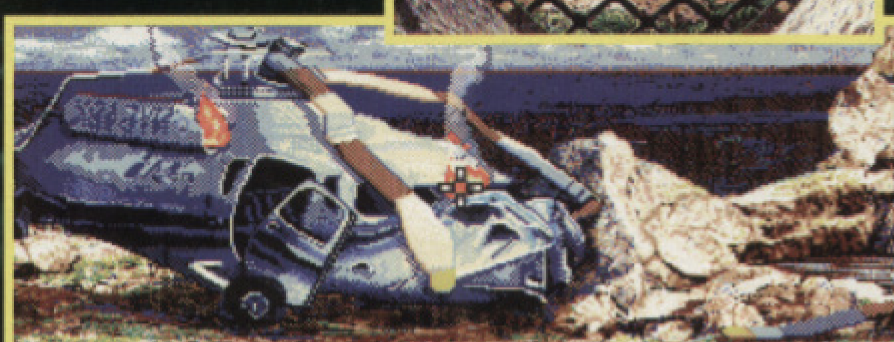


▼ *Hey, this bit's really 'grate'. Geddit!*

▲ *Egg record: Free Range, Farm fresh — you decide.*

▼ *Get Mike and Sarah out sub-game.*





GRAPHICS

83

▲Some impressive sweeping FMV sequences, and reasonable dinosaurs.
▼Lots of unimpressive jerky FMV and cluttered static screens.

SOUND

85

▲Using the animal cries as a signal is a good idea.
▼Most of the music is crud — why not use the excellent Williams' score?

PLAYABILITY

71

▲There's an initial urge to explore Isla Nublar.
▼The slow access and bland puzzles fail to induce tension.

LASTABILITY

74

▲There are some fiendish teasers, and it's easy to die.
▼Lack of excitement is the factor that brings down Jurassic CD's lastability.

VFM

78

▲An original product for the price of the cart version.
▼Jurassic CD doesn't deliver the elements of the film you really want.

OVERALL

73

In many ways another brave faltering step in Interactive Multi-media. But too unsteady in places to be much fun.



1 PLAYER | **16 MEG**

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

PRICE TBA

BY DATA EAST

RELEASE IMPORT

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: 3
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS:FINICKY
GAME DIFFICULTY:
AVERAGE

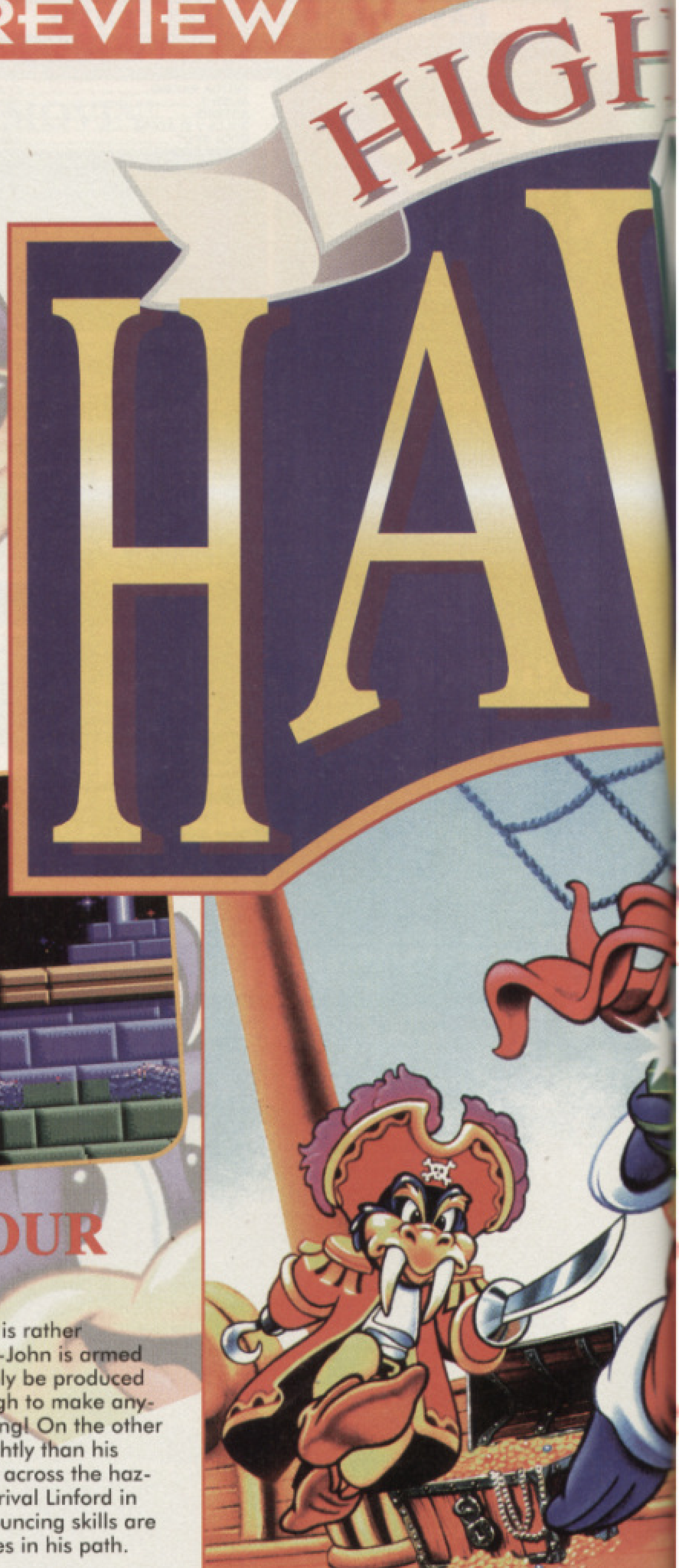
1ST DAY SCORE
Reach Burning Hamlet 2 stage.

ORIGIN
Take a dash of Sonic, the funniest bits of Bubsy, and a helping of Nintendo's Mega Man and you have High Seas Havoc.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
Guide Cap'n Havoc through thirteen rather familiar stages, with the intention of dispatching the evil pirate leader, Bernard The Brutal.



Tales of the sea are scary affairs. They recount stories of huge squid-like beasts capable of eating a ship whole, sirens out to sing crews to their death, and a mad sea Captain who gave it all up to create fish in breadcrumb meals. More often than not, though, the stories are simply regarding one-legged seafarers with a penchant for sporting exotic birds on their shoulders and white trails down their backs — pirates.

Data East's latest game revolves around the adventures of a young rapscallion pirate called Cap'n Havoc whose crew have been kidnapped by the eternally-evil Bernard The Brutal. Obviously this sort of behaviour is nothing new for a pirate such as Bernie, but this time he has an ulterior motive: the treasure map Havoc and crew were holding. According to legend (well, some drunk old scrote in the local tavern), a magical emerald which offers complete control of the seas awaits anyone who follows the map. Thus, having swotted up on rescue techniques from Sonic the Seafarer and Bubsy the Barnacle, Havoc is ready to take on Brutal on his own ground..



BUCKLING YOUR SWASH

For a swashbuckling pirate, Cap'n Havoc is rather defenceless. Although the wannabe Long-John is armed with his trusty cutlass, the weapon can only be produced whilst he is turning a somersault — enough to make anyone's eyes water if he gets his timing wrong! On the other hand, though, Havoc is a little more sprightly than his wooden-legged rivals and makes his way across the hazard-filled stages in huge leaps or runs to rival Linford in the sprinting stakes. Similarly, Havoc's bouncing skills are also called upon to kill the assorted nasties in his path. Now that's original...









CHEST A MINUTE

Dotted throughout the game are a number of treasure chests which, when jumped on, crack open to reveal these rather useful power-ups:

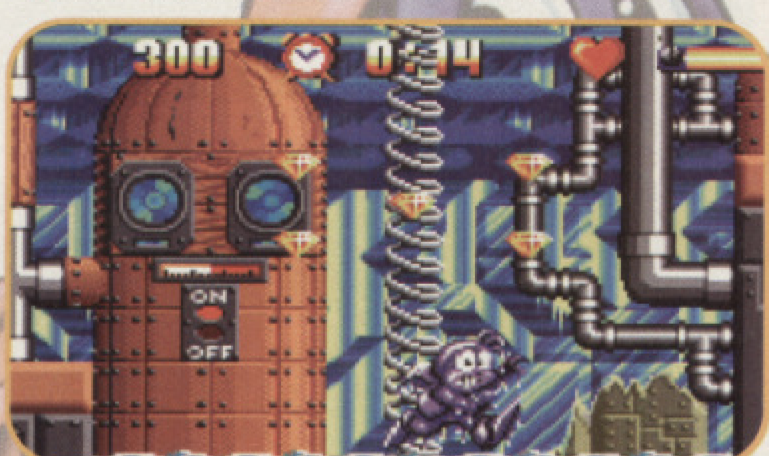
Diamonds: Earns a player a 'Diamond Point' – 100 of these equals an extra life.
Chicken Leg: Replenishes half energy.
Roast Ham: Complete damage recovery.
Treasure: 50 points to you, Squire.
Goblet: A mere 10 points.
Boots: Havoc runs faster in these.
Mini Havoc: An extra life, no less.







▲ *Fly, fly you fools! Aren't the old ones the best?*









COMMENT



STEVE

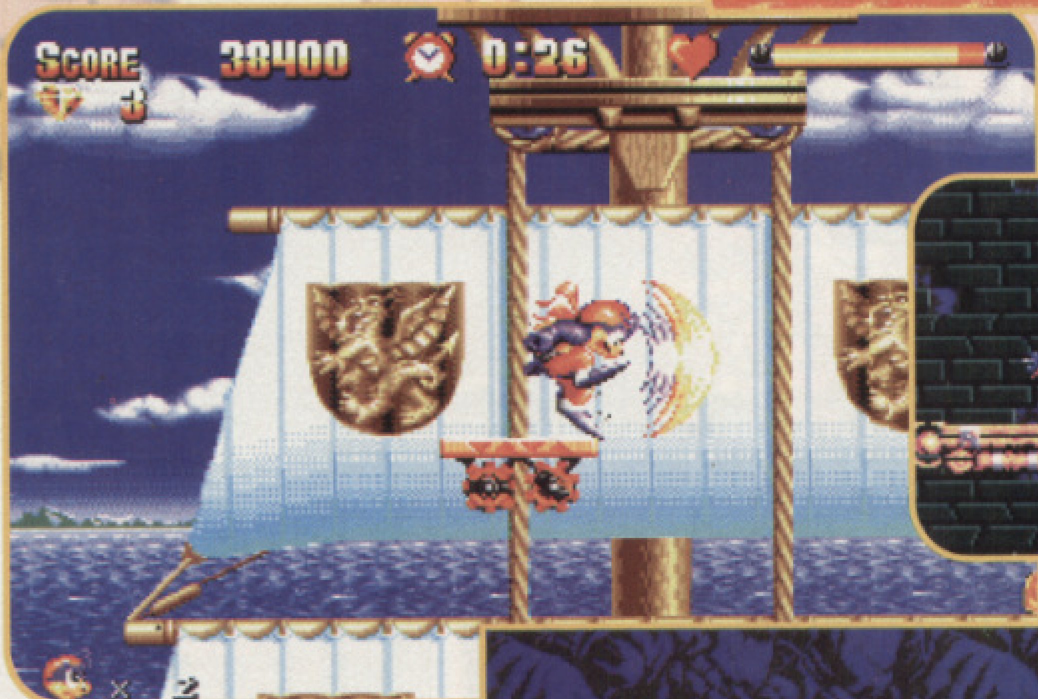
Data East have tried to incorporate the best bits from Sonic, Nintendo's Mega Man series and — believe it or not — Bubsy in their latest platformer. As such, High Seas Havoc contains Sonic's speed (well, in places), Mega Man's frustrating foes, and Bubsy's irritating death sequences — hardly the perfect recipe for a platform game! There's no doubting that it's a nice-looking game, but whilst High Seas Havoc has everything we have come to expect from a platformer, it just doesn't have that spark of playability to keep the player hooked. A lot of this can be pinned down to the stupid somersault/sword move needed to kill the foes but rarely works, whilst the rest is down to areas where it's seemingly impossible to get through unscathed. Basically, High Seas Havoc is like a British Rail pie: all attractive pastry, but sod all filling.

LEVEL-HEADED

Havoc's thirteen-stage mission starts in the green woodland of Cape Sealph and ends with a final face-off with Bernard in his fortress. Between this, though, Havoc battles through tried 'n' tested themed levels — including the obligatory ice and fire stages — each of which contains suitably adapted foes. As such, during the aquatic levels, expect to see more than your fair share of octopi and sharks, whilst the burning hamlet features a nasty line in fiery devils and imps.



▲ *Drumskin and Havoc in close shave lava scenario.*





▲ *Fun in the rigging.*



▲ *What a shellfish thing to do!*



COMMENT



GUS

It's criminal to make programmers and graphic artists as talented as these slave away on projects as unfulfilling as High Seas Havoc. As a platform game it has some luscious graphics, clever presentation and neat effects, but a platform game is still what it is. As platform games go it's fair — remarkably like Vic Tokai's Sonic clone 'Socket' reviewed a few months back. I personally think it's better than that (even though the overall mark is lower) but it still lacks the true measure of greatness. High Seas Havoc isn't a bad game, by any means, but it's a bit like buying Brotherhood of Man records in the age of punk.

THANKS TO:

Those good guys at Funhouse (0223 212192) for the loan of the cart

GRAPHICS — 82

▲Attractive sprites, and a good variety of backdrops. The ice level is particularly impressive.

SOUND — 69

▲A nice orchestra option, which makes a change from the usual sound tests. Nice music throughout the game.
▼-The sound effects are a bit weedy.

PLAYABILITY — 72

▲ It's nothing we haven't seen before, so it's easy to pick up.
▼The enemy sprites are too unpredictable, and this proves frustrating.

LASTABILITY — 52

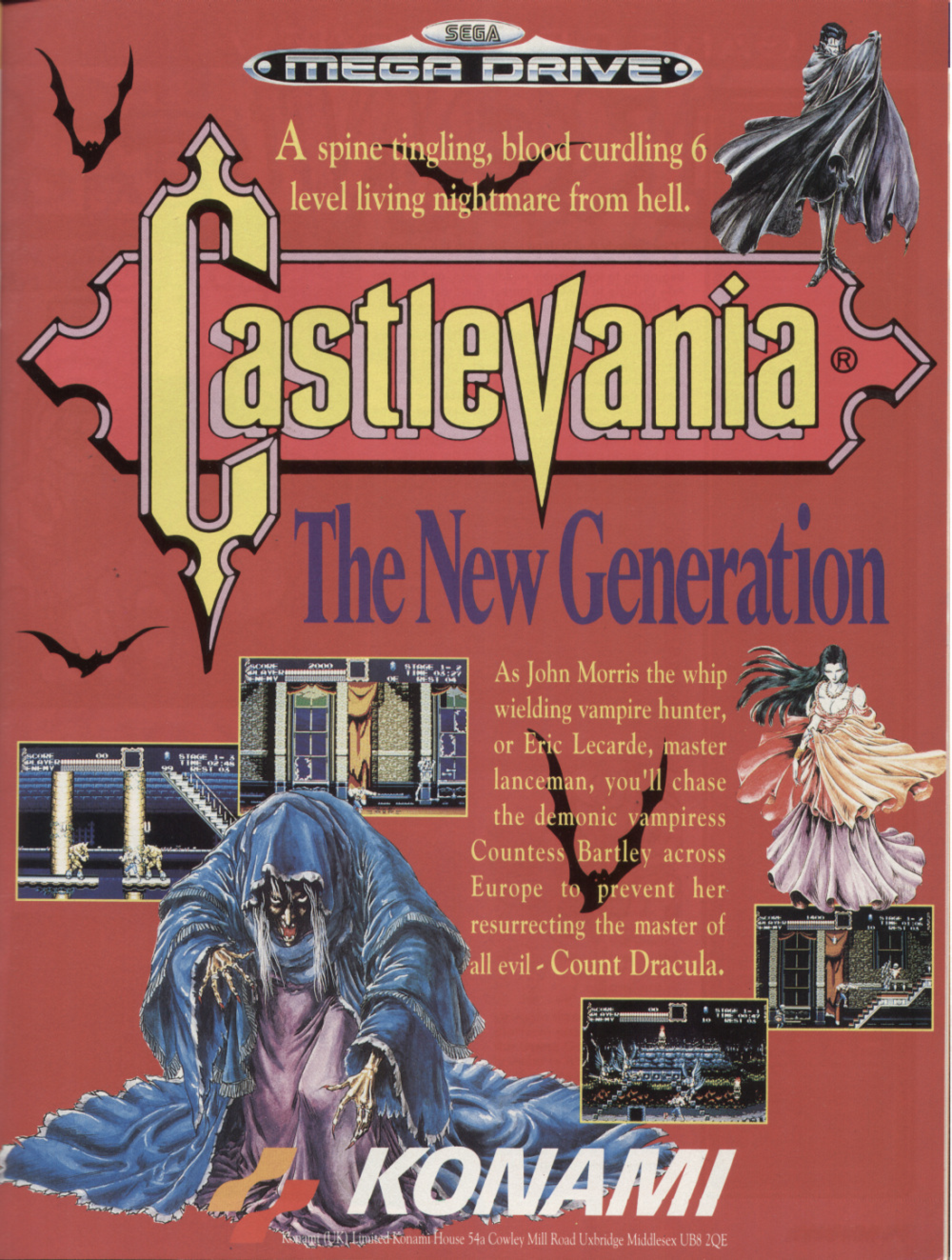
▲ Thirteen levels, each of which contains new foes.
▼The frustrating gameplay will soon prove tiresome. In addition, whilst the levels look varied, the content most certainly isn't.

VFM — 56

▼The price will obviously vary from importer to importer, but can you really see this rivalling Sonic 3? Methinks not...

OVERALL — 64

High Seas Havoc is a jolly-looking game which throws up the odd good idea, but it falls at the playability hurdle. Nothing new, and everything it does, the Sonic series does better.


SEGA
MEGA DRIVE
A spine tingling, blood curdling 6 level living nightmare from hell.
Castlevania®
The New Generation
As John Morris the whip wielding vampire hunter, or Eric Lecarde, master lanceman, you'll chase the demonic vampiress Countess Bartley across Europe to prevent her resurrecting the master of all evil - Count Dracula.
KONAMI
Konami (UK) Limited Konami House 54a Cowley Mill Road Uxbridge Middlesex UB8 2QE

REN & S…

QUEST FOR TH…



1 PLAYER | **4 MEG**

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

PRICE £29.99

BY SEGA

RELEASE MARCH

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: 4
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: OK
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY

1ST DAY SCORE
36,000

ORIGIN
Based on the two cult cartoon characters from US Cable channel Nickelodeon.

GAME BREAKDOWN
ORIGINALITY
REFLEXES
CHALLENGE
ACTION
STRATEGY

GAME AIM
Reach the end of each zone, which purportedly will enable the pair to shave Yaks in the future.

The comedy duo is dead — long live the cartoon comedy duo. Just as French and Saunders are beginning to look *terribly* middle-class, and Rik and Ade struggle to raise the merest glimmer of laughter, Britain becomes the butt of several US cartoon comedies.

Ren and Stimpy is the vanguard. The show stars the mexican-bred dog, Ren Hoek, the scrawny one, and his longtime companion Stimpy the cat, who has a fondness for his litter tray. A mixture of Sid Caesar gags and Monty Python silliness, the show was the inspired creation of one screwed-up animator (later dumped from his own show for his own worrying behaviour). The Game Gear version is a platform game, in common with the earlier Megadrive version, but this time follows the pair in their mission to reinstate the annual Yak shaving contest so dear to their hearts...





COMMENT



The nice thing about the Ren and Stimpy SHOW was that it offered something original, moderately funny and entertaining. Sadly, the Ren and Stimpy GAME is almost a mirror-image. It uses the blandest format available — bog-standard platform — doesn't begin to tap the humour of the show and proves tedious after a surprisingly short time. These characters have a real game potential, with their revolting habits and wacky world, but neither this, nor the Megadrive version, does nearly enough to capture it.

NASTY HABITS

Ren and Stimpy are well documented for having awful manners in public. True to form, the pair use their abilities as missiles against a range of foes. Ren ejects jet-propelled toothbrushes, whilst Stimpy has an endless procession of furballs to hawk up and spit at the meanies.



▼ *Ren and a lizard eye each other up.*



STIMPY

E SHAVEN YAK



AD BREAK

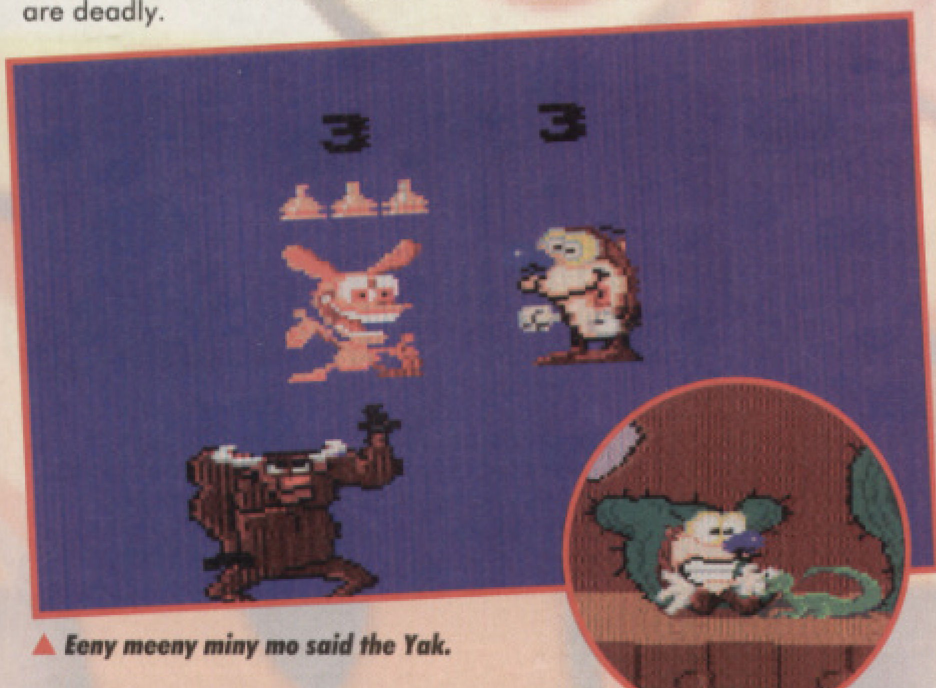
Ren and Stimpy love TV, especially all those commercials showing wonder products. This is a tenuous link into power-ups, but gadgets are found lying around the levels. These give increased offensive powers (like the homing Powdered toast missiles or ground-to-air soap bubbles) or health replenishment (water bottles). Uncannily, picking up a TV is also a reviving practice.





IN TONIGHT'S SHOW...

The graphics have a look similar to that of the series, and some of the sprites exhibit a particular R&S wackiness. Witness bears that cry, skunks that let off and, most strangely, drops of water that sprout legs as they hit the ground. All, of course, are deadly.



▲ *Eeny meeny miny mo said the Yak.*

COMMENT



Well, there goes the originality again, as Ren and Stimpy lose all the wackines of the TV series and are left to struggle through a bland platform game. Granted, the Game Gear can't exactly claim to host the best platformers known to man, but it can do better than this tawdry effort. much better. No effort has gone into this to base it on the cartoons, and it looks like a quick buck exercise to me.

GRAPHICS — 75

▲ Ren and Stimpy are quite well rendered. The backgrounds have a nice angular look.
▼ Everything is very simply presented. Lots of drab colours are used.

SOUND — 64

▲ Quirky use of classic cuts, like 'Night on Bare Mountain'.
▼-A really irritating tune is played for a lot of the time.

PLAYABILITY — 68

▲ At first, the use of reflexes is absorbing.
▼ The game reveals itself to be shallow in a short time.
VFM

LASTABILITY — 53

▼ A large swathe of continues and very simplistic gameplay doesn't help the attention span.

VFM — 67

▼ You could watch a lot of cartoons for this, and a four-meg cart has been used.

OVERALL — 65

Anything less than a splendid game is a disappointment and a let down for a pair like Ren and Stimpy.



1 PLAYER

16 MEG

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

PRICE TBA

BY TECMAGIK

RELEASE JUNE

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: ZIP
SKILL LEVELS: THREE
RESPONSIVENESS: NOT BAD
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY/AVERAGE

1ST DAY SCORE
COMPLETE 2 SETS

ORIGIN
If you've ever watched cartoons on a Sunday afternoon, you've probably seen the hero of Tecmagik's platformer in all his TV glory.

GAME BREAKDOWN

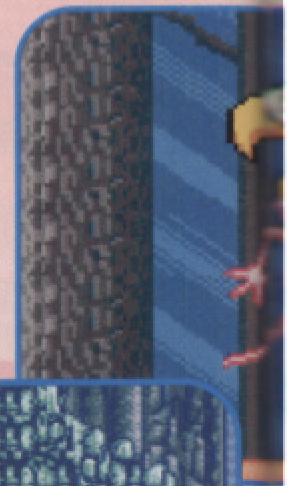


GAME AIM
Guide Pink to the boss at the end of each 'set' and give him a stuffing. Oh yeah, and don't forget to collect bonus stuff along the way..

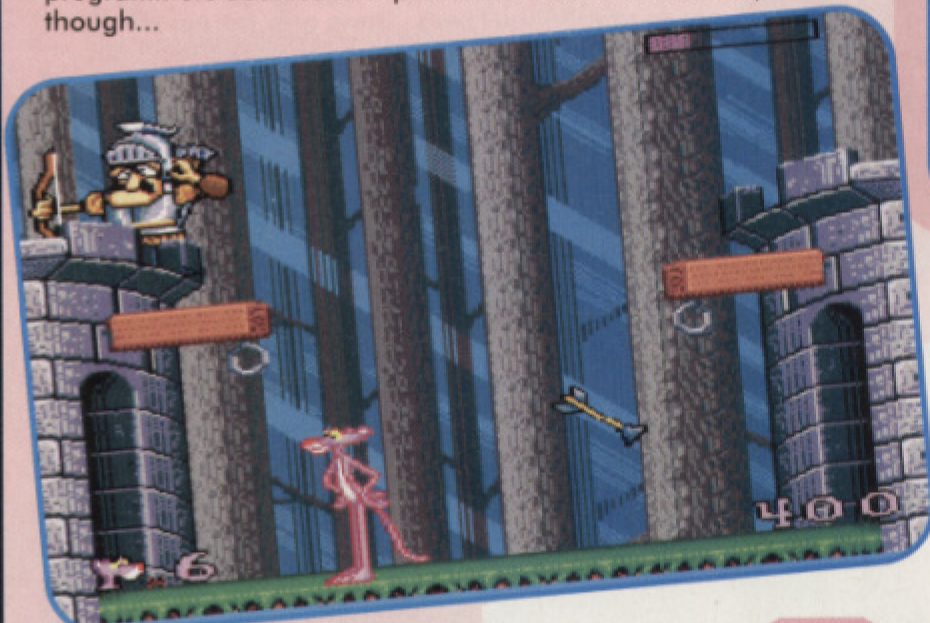
PIN
GOES T
HOLLY

Fifteen years ago, every kid watched the Pink Panther. On a Saturday night, it was essential viewing. Just after the football scores had been read out, and before a youthful Jimmy Saville fixed it for even more greedy kids, the Pink Panther would appear in two cartoons, with a dull Inspector Clouseau one stuffed in the middle. But — and this is a major but — right at the end, the Inspector and all the others would be picked up from the cinema in this really smart pink racing car, driven by a ginger-haired, freckly kid. Boy, how I wanted to be that kid — I'd even have suffered his appearance for a chance to get behind that wheel.

In fact, anything I could have done to get a go in that car, was done. Pink Panther chocolate bars were consumed by the handful (and, yes, even the chocolate was pink), TV comic was bought in the vain hope there'd be a competition to win the car, and I even wrote off to Jimmy to fix it for me. Now, Tecmagik has brought the rinky-dink Pink Panther bang up to date in a platformer. It doesn't have the car in it, but as it only featured in the last two minutes in the TV show, I doubt if the programmers deemed it important. It meant a lot to me, though...





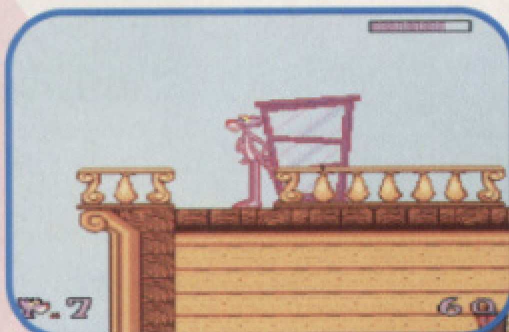


COMMENT



LUCY

When the half finished version of this arrived in the office some months ago, I thought it had the potential to be a nice little game Unfortunately, the finished product has proved me wrong. There's nothing really awful about it — the graphics are good, the sound typically Pink Panther and there are some neat bits in it such as the flying carpet section and the hidden levels. But it is just another platform, there aren't enough baddies, the controls are decidedly dubious, more could have been done with the animation, there's some bad sprite detection and it soon gets boring wandering around aimlessly, looking for the exit. A good licence sadly wasted, I'm afraid and not worth paying good money for.







▲ *The mysterious booth.*

SET PIECE

Pink's adventure starts with an introductory sequence where he is caught painting the Hollywood sign his favourite colour. Fleeing retribution, he escapes into a film set resembling the kitchen from Honey, I Shrunk The Kids. However, on exploring the platform-laden location, Pink discovers it also offers access to linked sets. Including ones based on Robin Hood, Cat On A Hot Tin Roof, Tarzan, and any ghost story you've ever seen. However, before he gets to his chosen location, a nightmarish walk through the back of the set adds a smaller sub-level where manic cameras and falling sand bags threaten to sap Pink's energy





HEY, BIG NOSE!

When Pink has made his way across the eight-way-scrolling landscape and collected a predetermined number of star icons and power-ups, he is left to battle it out with a boss chap. These vary from stage to stage, but are based on that big-nosed guy our rinky-dink hero annoys so much in every episode. For example, during the 'Pinkin Hood' segment, the Manilow-lookalike dons a suit of armour and attacks from one of four battlements. Until you hit him enough and he keels over, that is...



COMMENT



STEVE

Boom, boom, boom, another one bits the dust... As the Pink Panther wanders into a slow-moving platformer with all the excitement of an episode of Home And Away, I still find it hard to believe that all the time Tecmagik has spent developing this game has resulted in such an uninspired effort. Granted, the cartoons themselves aren't that exciting, but surely they could have produced something better than this tedious effort. The levels Pink explores are nothing better than average, and the only time the game ever gets taxing is when the unfair collision detection results in the unavoidable loss of energy. What few good ideas there are in Pink Panther — the spooky stage's secret labs, for example — are sorely wasted, leaving another licence cop-out which is best avoided.



▲ *A seedy looking warehouse.*

GLOVE AND WAR

Pink's only protection from the many bad guys is a gun which fires a boxing glove. As the assorted ghosts/archers/cats/whatever attack, a swift rebuke from this novelty gadget will see them off. However, some of the larger monsters Pink faces — Frankenstein's monster, for example — require several hits, and this is where the game's handy power-ups come in useful. These appear as icons dotted around the levels and range from a device to extend the range of the glove-gun, magic platforms to bridge previously-inaccessible gaps, and an umbrella to break a long fall.





▲ *Caught in the vice-like grip of Mrs Shelley's Frankenstein.*

GRAPHICS 80

▲The sprites are near-prefect renditions of their TV counterparts.
▼The animation leaves a little to be desired.

SOUND 59

▼If Henry Mancini was dead he'd be spinning in his grave at 100mph if he heard Tecmagik's rendition of the cartoon's theme music.

PLAYABILITY 69

▲Pink is extremely easy to control.
▼The sprite detection leaves a lot to be desired.

LASTABILITY 67

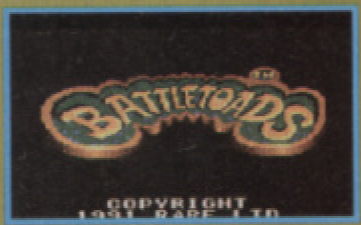
▲ The stages feature a number of secret locations and clever touches.
▼It's all rather samey, and the dodgy controls are a little off-putting.

VFM 53

▼There's nothing really new here, and Pink certainly can't compete with the the 'big boy' platform players.

OVERALL 60

A bland platformer with none of the cartoon character's style or finesse. A few nice ideas get lost in a bog of mediocrity.



1 PLAYERS

2 MEG

GAME TYPE
Platform/fight

PRICE £29.99

BY RARE

RELEASE MARCH

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: 3
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: VERY GOOD
GAME DIFFICULTY:
HARD

1ST DAY SCORE
250,000

ORIGIN
Battletoads has been ported from the Game Boy to the NES, Super NES, MD and finally the GG.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
Battle the forces of Gargantua with the crack team of Special Forces Amphibians. Rescue the Princess by use of extreme toad violence.



As we are in recession, it appears plots are being slashed liberally. Take Battletoads on the Game Gear. Previous versions of this game had a perfectly reasonable silly plot which has just been expunged from this Sega hand-held cart. Turn on and you're greeted with the title screen. No storyboard, no animated bit, just 'wham bam thank you ma'am'.

Luckily, I know the plot, so I'll tell you. A wicked space sorceress has kidnapped a beautiful space princess, and it's up to the Battletoads — three intrepid agents — to enter the multi-chambered lair of Gargantua to rescue her. These fearsome fellows have the most awesome hand-to-hand fighting skills in space, and a wide array of gadgetry. This won't stop it being one of the toughest adventures you've ever faced, though, so be prepared...

COMMENT

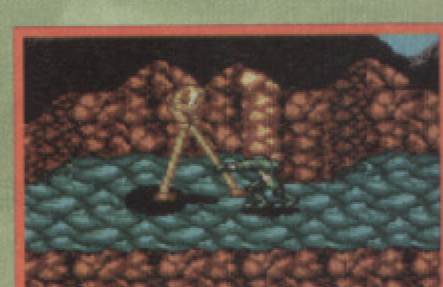
STEVE

Well, the Battletoads finally hit the Game Gear, and do it in some style. I was expecting loads of stuff in the original NES and Game boy versions to be lopped out, but everything seems to be present and correct — with the exception of any presentation whatsoever! Still, if you've never had the experience of smacking seven barrels out of all manner of weird aliens whilst catching flies with your tongue, now's your chance. Battletoads is a playable,varied game, and this in itself is a bit of a rarity for the Game Gear. Worth a shufty.

SMARTLY WEBBED

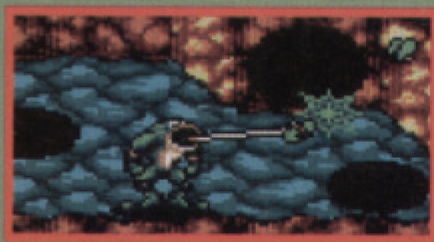
Those Toads sure pack a punch. Many of the levels are scrolling beat 'em ups. Flying pigs, ogres, and the like assault you by bursting out of the scenery — and then there's the stilt monsters. Hit these, and you can use the debris as a weapon. By punching something repeatedly, you work up to a super punch, which blasts it into oblivion. There are other running, jump-kicking and even body throw movements.





FLUTTER TONGUE

One way to increase your Toad's energy bar is to use that massive tongue of yours. It can nip a passing fly out of the air. Otherwise, look out for Space Invaders bearing gifts...



THEME FROM SHAFT

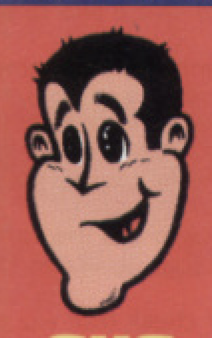
In one segment, your toad is dangling perilously on a thread, lowered into a shaft. There are all sorts of nasties: vultures, man-eating plants and electronic guards. Timing those swings is essential.





▲ *Thankfully, Ralph's pant elastic broke his fall.*

COMMENT



GUS

At last, something for the Game Gear with a bit of meat in it. Battletoads has been pretty superb in its previous guises, and this Sega handheld version is a gem. The colours are brilliant, animation fine and the music groovy. Most of all, the game is stacked with features and variations that make it tough but never dull. This feels like a 16-bit game, with its plethora of different levels. It also presents a real challenge, with some devious sections and limited continues. The Battletoads concept is an old one, but with nothing else to compete for attention, this is Game Gear release of the year so far.





GRAPHICS

▲Great use of colour, and the Battletoads themselves have never looked better.

91

SOUND

▲Some of the coolest sound on the Game Gear in many a month. Great FX.

89

PLAYABILITY

▲Just when you get used to one level something new comes along.

▼Sometimes you seem to get a kicking for no reason,

90

LASTABILITY

▲Loads of levels, with a genuine challenge in each.

▼The frustration factor rises as the difficulty level increases.

89

VFM

▲The cheapest version of Battletoads — and quality hasn't been compromised.

91

OVERALL

89

A game of substance, even brilliance. The Battletoads are a force to be reckoned with.

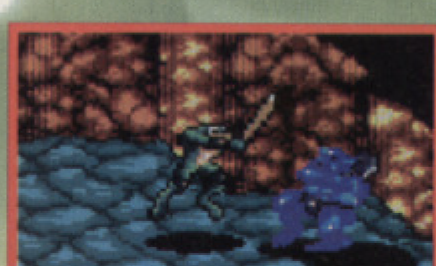
LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

Battletoads is the closest thing to a variety show on a console. There's lots of different gamestyles packed in. Platform sections like the ice-level, flying bits, maze puzzles in the snake pit and riding the toad cycles. You never know what's coming next.









1-2 PLAYERS	2 MEG
PRICE	£29.99
BY	SEGA
RELEASE	MARCH
GAME TYPE	ADVENTURE

"So you are ze buyers from Zega, que?

"Yes, that's right. We'd like to see all your beans, if you please".

"Zeze are ze beans we recommend for Mazter Zyztem games, they are very..."

"What about these beans over there?".

"Zose are ze 'Mean Beans', we normally only uze zem in Megadrive games".

"At Zega, we like to use the same quality of beans in our Master System games that you keep for the Megadrive. I'll take them all".

"Hadn't I better check that wiz ze bozz?".

"You just have!"

Millions of little MEAN MACHINES readers have grown up to realise:
Beanz Meanz Tetris.



GRAPHICS	**66**
Very spartan, but effective.	
SOUND	**62**
Only a single tune and an absence of many sound FX.	
PLAYABILITY	**8**
High, although the foes lack don't attack enough.	
LASTABILITY	**82**
The Story Mode is short-lived, the other modes last longer.	
VFM	**91**
Comparable with Megadrive Mean Bean for much less dosh.	
OVERALL	**87**
A polished puzzler that is a treat for two players.	

A-TROUGH-Y

Mean Bean machine is a two-way battle of renewal. Throughout the game, linked beans in a variety of colours fall into the player's troughs. These will begin to stack untidily unless you rotate the beans so colours match. When a group of matching beans exceeds four, the beans disappear, leaving a gap that any stacked above fall into. This process continues until either the right or left player is unable to stop beans piling off the top of the screen.



COMMENT



LUCY

Most of the features of the Megadrive version have been packed into the Master System cart — with almost as much fun value. My only reservation is that the one-player Scenario mode is too easy — I finished it in a couple of hours. But it's nice to see a two-player mode packed in there which should provide endless pleasure, as well as a pretty tough puzzle mode which I'm still battling with! Topper stuff and a must buy for all puzzle freaks.

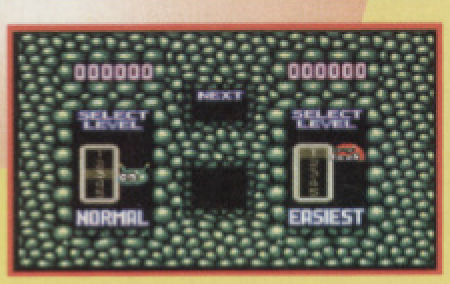
COMMENT

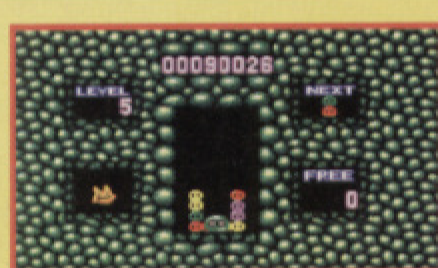


GUS

All the features of the 16-bit version are here, if not quite so accomplished. In comparison, the screen window is a bit smaller, and the opponents are definitely not so challenging. With a few lucky breaks, you can make mincemeat of very advanced foes, although the speed does up considerably. The other play modes are better, with tough puzzles and endless two-player potential. Mean Bean Machine is the classiest Master System puzzle game to date.



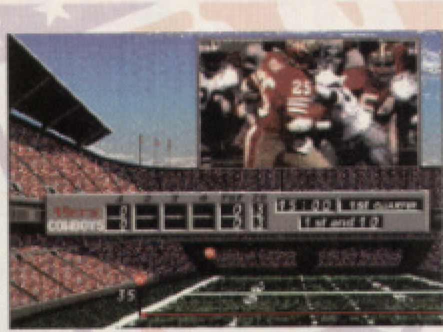


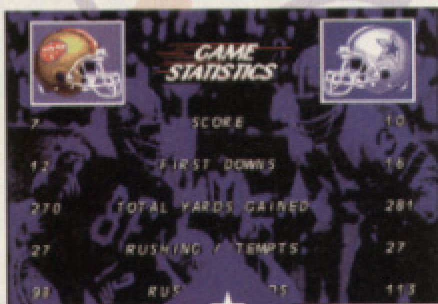


PERSONAL TRAINER

There are two one-player modes: Exercise is an open-ended game, with you trying to rack up a new high score. Puzzle Mode sets objectives — line up 12 beans, complete four waves, etc.

1-2 PLAYERS	
PRICE	£40
BY	SEGA
RELEASE	IMPORT
GAME TYPE	SPORT

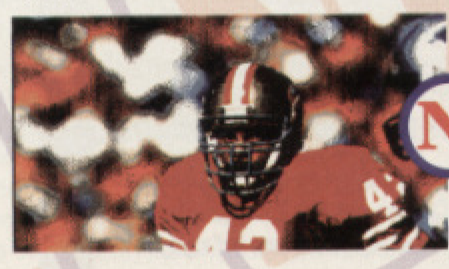




NFL'S GREATEST

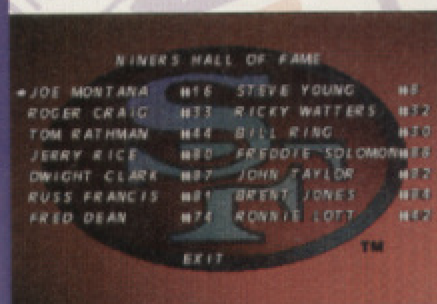
All across America, men sit like zombies stuffing popcorn into their mouths, swigging Dr Pepper and staring at the TV — and If there's a live football game on then all the better. The puzzling thing is, if all America watches sport from the couch, who can all those people in the stadium be? The only answer is actors.

In a country where such a perverse situation could just possibly be true, a game like NFL's Greatest was inevitable. All the 'best' from 15 years of Super Bowl — not just on boring VHS tape, but on good old grainy Sega-CD — the medium of the 90s!



LUCK BE A LADY TONIGHT!

The game aspect of NFL's Greatest is slim indeed. You have an almost static view of the pitch with no players in sight. You are then given a limited amount of plays (about twelve) to select from. The computer or second player does the same and then the video plays. The film gives you a rough idea of who won the encounter, before the main screen displays any change in yardage and possession.



▲ *Fascinatingly statulistic!*



THANKS TO... MARTIN AT VIDEO GAMES CENTRE (TEL. 0302 527314)

COMMENT



GUS

I'm not sure this should be in MEAN MACHINES SEGA at all, as its pretext as a game is very slender. By reading the instructions you gradually pick up the fact that this is just a library of footballing moments, with a cosmetic 'strategy' game used to market it. What a waste of everyone's time. I'm sure that football fans would rather watch footage of a better quality (I think even a Viewmaster would be better than this) and game fans will actually want some interaction. This diabolical hybrid caters for neither group.

THROUGH THE SMALL WINDOW

The FMV parts of the game are its main substances, maybe even its reason for existence. As such, it seems sensible to be able to toggle the main image window. There's full-screen, which displays a very pixellated display, or a compact, more detailed window. Both are in 16-colour 'Truvideo'. This is the same system used for Ground Zero Texas, and is an improvement on early FMV images, but not up to the latest Cinepak technology.

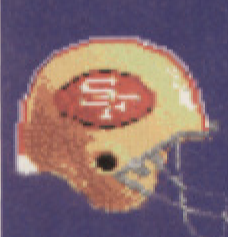


▲ *It shouldn't be allowed!*



GRAPHICS	**52**
The video footage is extremely grainy and repetitive.	
SOUND	**76**
A tmospheric sounds captured on CD, but awful 'rawk' soundtrack	
PLAYABILITY	**5**
The 'game' element is minuscule and random.	
LASTABILITY	**4**
It will be surprising if you play this for more than a day.	
VFM	**14**
Catch the highlights on Channel Four for free rather than this.	
OVERALL	**5**
NFL's Greatest is a waste of everyone's time. It's truly awful.	

COMMENT



STEVE

What could be worse than a rough 'n' tough American Football game with all the good bits taken out? Gone are the tactical plays offered by the likes of Madden and its kind, replaced by a terrible multiple-choice format akin to something a sports teacher might set if the footy pitch was water-logged. This is an absolute travesty and has about as much to do with genuine playability as Rustie Lee does to Hang-gliding

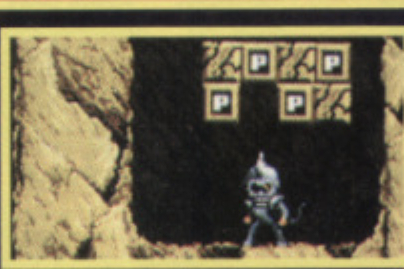
THE COURT

Silence in court! Within the sphere of the Criminal Law, the Court of Appeal functions as the last resort of the convicted. It is the one place for them to receive clemency, consideration and even acquittal from their sentence.

Similarly, in the world of Sega, many video games have faced condemnation in the past, have been banished to the very reaches of the top shelf, with reviewers comments ringing in their ears and nary a snowball's chance in Hell of being bought. Now, Sega have repackaged many of these titles with an attractive bargain price-point, and the prospect of them appearing in public shops must be faced. Are they a potential menace to society, or should they be given a clean bill of health?

CASE NO.1 — KID CHAMELEON

History: Kid Chameleon appeared before Jaz and Rad, as a platform game where a young 'hip' kid tried on various helmets and suffered personality changes as a result.



PROSECUTION

M'lud I point to the testimony at the time that this game was 'far too easy'. My colleague Jaz claimed there was only one hard bit, some six levels into the game and the rest was 'plain sailing from there to the finish'. And the main character is about as hip as Keith Chegwin. A sad victim of juvenile delinquency.

DEFENCE

I'd like to draw your grace's attention to remarks made at the time praising Kid Chameleon's 'novel ideas' and originality. The game is quite easy, but still has something to offer, some two years on. Many newer games, like Socket and High Seas Havoc offer little more.

JUDGEMENT

In these terrible, terrible days, we sadly cannot expect huge amount of originality. However, Master Chameleon's greatest crime is that it is too easy — and that in itself is unforgivable. As such, I feel that Kid should be locked away until he has repented – perhaps in time for Middle-Aged Chameleon?



THE COURT



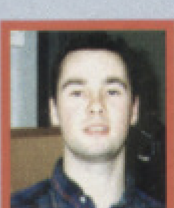
JUDGE — LORD JUSTICE MERRETT

Stephen Merrett has sat on the bench for some years (as a result he has terrible piles). He is renowned for harsh sentencing, and his spelling is not too hot either.



DEFENCE — THE LEARNED LUCY HICKMAN

She was called to the bar at the age of eighteen (and had to wait three years to get served). Lucy is a legendary cross-examiner, but she does it even better when she's in a good mood.



PROSECUTION — ANGUS SWAN QC

Respected and experienced, Gus has been wearing wigs and garters for as long as he can remember (but only while working). A scourge of some software firms, he memorably sent Andre Agassi down for a very long time.



OF APPEAL

CASE NO.2 TOEJAM AND EARL

History: Toejam and Earl first appeared on trial some two and a half years ago. The cartridge caused a considerable affray by starring two interstellar 'dudes' in an overhead-viewed exploration game set in a 'wacky' multi-level environment.



PROSECUTION
I think the bench should make a stern example of Messrs. Toejam and Earl. True, there is a modicum of humour within the game, but it fails to disguise the simplicity of the gameplay. It's real crime is looking dated, whilst acting hip. The console equivalent of 'MC' Hammer.

DEFENCE
My colleague's remarks are totally unjustified. Toejam and Earl was hailed as a 'cult classic' and 'a bonkers adventure' and I personally find it as much fun to play now as then. If being chased by mad dentists and ice-cream vans is subversive, then that's what I am.

JUDGEMENT
Simplicity in a game is often a good thing and, at the time, Messrs Toejam and Earl were somewhat more interesting than their rivals. It should also be noted that the pair recently finished community service in a sequel, which we would recommend the jury look at instead.

CASE NO.3 ART ALIVE

History: This maverick cart attempted to the unlikely feat of mixing art and console-gaming together. Buyers were attracted by a picture of a family making a picture of a fish on the front cover. The cart allows you to draw pictures on screen, like a console Etch a Sketch. And there are no death moves.



PROSECUTION
The area of law this comes into is Trades' Description. Art Alive is neither artistic or living. The range of drawing tools is minimal, results look awful and cannot be saved. Even at £14.99, I'd advise the public to buy some felt-tips and an Ecology pad instead.

DEFENCE
In this case, the defence has no evidence to offer. I'm sorry — it's crud.

DJUDGEMENT
Art Alive is a sad and practically useless cart. It's bad enough that it has to live with this knowledge, but I recommend it is locked away and the key lost in transit.

CASE NO.4 MERCS

History: Mercs was part of a fad for upwardly-scrolling shoot 'em ups featuring hunky marines and unfortunate gringos. Players would storm up foreign landscapes carrying all sorts of weapons without a thought of trespass or passport controls.



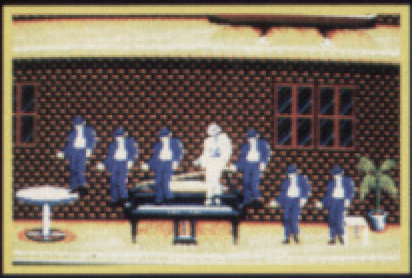
PROSECUTION
It pains me to tell the court that I have gleaned some enjoyment from Mercs. Counsel at the original trial, said this was 'a spot-on conversion'. But really, is this the sort of lager-loutish behaviour when Britons go abroad that we can applaud?

DEFENCE
The prosecution has to concede that Mercs is an exceedingly good game, with its 'meatiest mega-weapons ever seen'. This court isn't hear to pass judgement on foreign policy, but on standards of gaming in *this* country. In that area Mercs is unquestionably a bargain classic.

JUDGEMENT
The prosecution's evidence does little to dampen the enjoyable — if violent — nature of Mercs. The court recommends is should be allows back into everyday life — and should mix with society again as soon as possible.

CASE NO.5 MOONWALKER

History: An interesting old case of Rignall v Jackson. The ambidextrous performer was behind a Megadrive platform game, where he took on a plethora of wrong-doers with his fear-inducing dance routines and bunny hops. Aiow!



PROSECUTION
Any proceedings dealing with Michael Jackson must be done with care and compassion. But this game simply doesn't wash. Being a laughable and dated platform affair, it has no business on the shelves, even at a bargain price-point. As an act of simple mercy, let us put it away, so that no-one need smirk at its 'formation-dancing dogs' again.

DEFENCE
The Defence disagrees. Moonwalker was rated quite highly in its day, and no less than Jaz Rignall said 'there's plenty of fun to be had'. Yes, it is out of date, but Matt Regan's recommendation stands true: 'For Jackson fans who like rescuing kids'.

JUDGEMENT
It is clear that Michael Jackson is no longer a... 'hip cat', I believe the phrase is. I feel his antics are tiresome and as uninteresting as his music. I also recommend the game is kept away from children.

CASE NO.6 EA DOUBLE HEADER

History:This joint case covers two previous trials: John Madden '92, the first update of the comprehensive American Football sim, mixing strategy and arcade action. The second is EA Hockey, the original team sport on ice with a smooth, vertically-scrolling rink.

PROSECUTION
In my mind, these original two offenders are worthy only of praise and not censure, and it seems suspiciously good value to have them together on one pack. But they have simply become persistent re-offenders. How many times have we seen John Madden pass through the reviewing process, and his accomplice Mr. Hockey? Too many, I contend.

DEFENCE
I find my learned friend doing the Defence's work for her! These are simply stunning games that deserve gratitude and a new lease of life. They cannot be held responsible for the faults of their relatives; John Madden '93, '94, NHLPA and the sinister Bill Walsh. I sue for a dismissal.

JUDGEMENT
I feel that it is only fair that these original classics are allowed back on the outside to earn some more money. They cannot be blamed for the unscrupulous behaviour of their relatives. Case dismissed.

CASE NO.7 X-MEN

History: This cart appears before the court not long after its first assessment.. X-men features the six uncanny heroes, in a cannily produced platform beat 'em up, with two player's taking on Magneto's forces.



PROSECUTION
I'm surprised to see the X-men before the bench again so soon. They obviously a very slick team with oodles of playability. There's only one charge to be levelled against this game selling at £20 — it's a steal!

DEFENCE
My uncanny friends have been vindicated. It's a case of mistaken identity, where the real culprits are Spiderman and the Uncanny X-men from Acclaim — a dull platform romp which sells at double the price. Justice for the Sega X-men six!

JUDGEMENT
A clear case of mistaken identity on the prosecution's part. It is wrong that this cart be brought for retrial so soon after its release, but I intend to free it and feel it should be given a fresh start by the general public.

CASE NO.8 SPACE HARRIER 2

History: A very old Megadrive title based on a coin-op, where the player flew across a 3-D chequered landscape, blasting huge sprite-linked dragons in a shoot 'em up frenzy.

PROSECUTION
The offence here is a gross one — attempting to conduct a shoot 'em up in un-spaceworthy vehicle. This vehicle is a death-trap — shuddery graphics, poor sound and repetitive gameplay. Even the budget tag is no excuse — to the knackers' yard with it.

DEFENCE
It's easy to be unkind about this game, but I ask you to consider this — what alternatives are there? The Megadrive has few 3-D shooters, bar the atrocious Galaxy Force II. And there are some people with a soft spot for the original arcade game. I'd permit it to be bought if owners choose with due care and attention.

JUDGEMENT
Space Harrier, it is quite visible that you have spent all your memory on presentation, leaving none for gameplay. You will be sent to live in a darkened room, where nobody will be forced to endure you again. Send him down...

MEGA SHOP GUIDE

BIRMINGHAM

NO WIMPS

HARD LEVEL

TOUGH PLAYERS ONLY

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IF YOU'RE A WIMP DONT PLAY AT HARD LEVEL.
BIRMINGHAMS LATEST CONSOLE SHOP.

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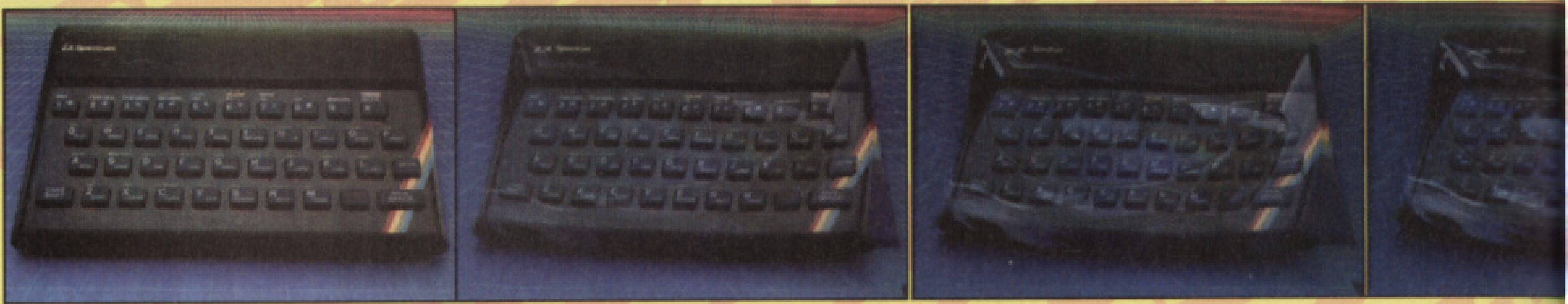
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MEGA SHOP GUIDE

SCOTLAND

SURREY

SCOTLAND



HOW WE US

In the beginning there was darkness. Then the great God, Binatone, looked down at the poor, uninspired people and gave them light. Well, Pong. As man marvelled at the incredible rectangular Edbergs and Graffs as they bounced the square ball to each other, already Binatone's deity status was under attack from the larger usurpers, Atari and Mattel. Consequently, like the historical mighty empires, consoles and computers have risen and fallen, with more advanced system leap-frogging their out-moded parents.

Despite this progress, the old adage 'The More Things Change, The More They Stay The Same' has never been truer. Regardless of how advanced the video game industry becomes, the promotion of software, the game genres, and the companies behind them remain much the same. Hard to believe? Well, join us as we delve into every aspect of the video game market in search of some of the crappiest and most ground-breaking games, ads, peripherals and ideas you'll ever see. We're going back... back... back...

PRICE WARS

If you were miffed when the price of a Megadrive was reduced from £200 to its present £80+, spare a thought for the poor so-and-sos who were lashing out for the then state-of-the-art Atari VCS machines and C64s. Think cartridge prices are dear today? Well, VCS owners had to pay around £35 for a 2-4K game — that's less than 1/50th of a MEG! Similarly, a kit-form ZX81 with its massive 1K memory (enough for 30 lines of BASIC) cost £50 whilst the C64 weighed in at a hefty £350 for its eight-colour palette.

And, because this was at the dawn of gaming, there was every chance the system you opted for would be obsolete by the end of the week! The Elan Enterprise, Jupiter Ace, Philips G7000, Sharp MZ80K, Texas TI99 4/A, Acorn Atom, Genie 1, Oric Atmos, Dragon 32, Atari 5200, and the MSX range — every one claimed to be the next generation of home computing, and all went the way of the Dodo.



▲ *The Genie! Made to last with its built-in tape recorder. Looks tempting, doesn't it? Get 'em while they're hot!*



▲ *Witness the amazing Sinclair loo-roll printer. This excellent machine opened the world of publishing up to humble Spectrum/ ZX81 owners. Using that funny paper used in public toilets and for lining cake tins, it was just the job for a printout of your Biorhythms chart.*

PERIPHERALIA

Back in the early Eighties, computers were so limited it was only sensible to strap things on to make them better. Cue the misguided peripheral spree. The first buy, of course, was a joystick. Sadly, Spectrum owners had to buy a widget to allow them to connect the joystick before they even bought the joystick! The Kempston interface was born. But it wasn't the only one, so games had to come with all the different control possibilities, including Saddos-who-don't-own-a-Quickshot II-mode. The Quickshot was the 'stick du temps'; even less responsive than it is today and the cause of many a boring conversation on 'microswitches' and 'gold leaf contacts'.

But beyond that was an exciting world, where companies tempted you to believe your Z80 processor was the key to global computer domination! Your computer could even gain the power of speech. The microspeech was a sad abomination with a ridiculous £50 price tag. By typing in phonetic patterns, you'd hear a spoken return that makes Stephen Hawking sound as animated as Ken Dodd. Apart from "We are the Daleks" and, "Malfunction: does not compute", the Currah speech was useless to man or beast.

One final word on one essential addition — the fast loader. Did you know it originally took 15 MINUTES for Manic Miner to load on a C64! Think on that the next time you grumble about your Mega-CD.



...SED TO LIVE...



RIP-OFF

A lot of mail comes to MEAN MACHINES complaining about lack of originality in games. But in the Dark Ages, there may have been hundreds of companies making games, but it was all the same old crap. Ideas emerged for the first time in arcades and were mercilessly ripped off by Darren and Wayne of the Back Bedroom Software Company. Example: Namco's Pac-man which caused a storm between 1980 and '81. Tons of unlicensed clones left little doubt what they were offering: Puckman, Spriteman, Bite Man, Maze Man, Dotman, Zuckman, Munchie Man, Gulpman II, Gobbleman, Gobbler, Ghostman, Ghost's Revenge, Monster Muncher, etc. Other games subjected to the treatment were Centipede, a garden-pest based blaster, Frogger (ripped-off with various Frogman, Jogger and Chicken-related programs) and Donkey Kong. By the time of Kong, though, the companies had even given up thinking of original names, so they're were umpteen versions of Krazy Kong floating about. Tragically, Ocean even bought the rights to an abysmal sequel — Kong Strikes Back.

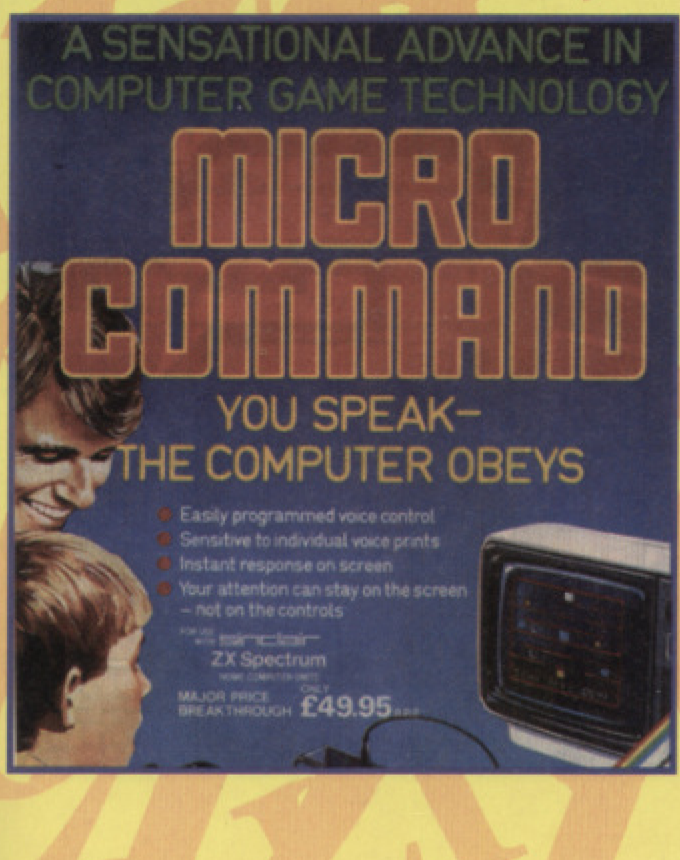


▲ *One very sad Pac-Man clone down, 12,799 to go...*





▲ *And Pharoah would not let the Israelites go, and lo, there was a plague of froggers.*





MAGS & ADS

What MEAN MACHINES SEGA does, and what the mags of the time did is essentially the same. The grandaddy of them all is our own CVG. It's survived well over a decade of change and upheaval. It's hard not to giggle at the past efforts. The mag was in mono; it's was hard to tell between reader's artwork and commissioned drawings and the letter's page is full of fascinating letters about Checksum errors and Pokes. A checksum was the topic of many a saddo's conversation. It's a small routine that allows you to check data by adding the values together and checking the total. And a poke was a way of jigging about with the code of a game. A bit like a stone-age Action Replay.
For a long time anoraks of that type held sway. Computers weren't supposed to be fun — even computer games weren't meant to be fun. Instead you amused yourself with the Listings. Unbelievably, Listings were 'complete games' shown as lines of text in BASIC, printed 'free' with each issue. Listings were UTTERLY crap for the following reasons:

1. They looked ruddy awful on the page.
2. There was always a printing error, so they didn't work.
3. Even if there wasn't an error, you'd type in the data incorrectly*
4. Even if you typed in the data correctly, the game was bugged.
5. Even if the game wasn't bugged it was usually crap.

*(see bit about Checksums).

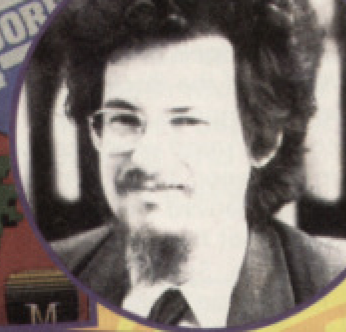


▲ **Kevin Toms, sex god of Addictive Software.**



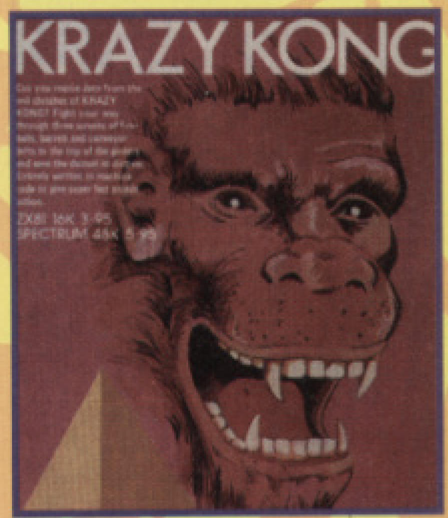






▼ **Fact: Take it from us that this kid looks like Publishing Director, David Kelly.**







Happily, as computers became cheaper, and adults bought them for kids, readers' desires changed. The new lot were not interested in the biorhythms program, thankyouverymuch, and even less concerned with listings. The new mags were review-based affairs which distantly resemble our own MEAN MACHINES. Of course, a dwindling bunch of Dads wrote in to waffle on about Checksums, how awful it was that people were using computers to enjoy themselves and that skirt hems had moved above the ankle. But their day was done. In any computer ad before 1984, Dad was always standing behind Junior, pointing at the screen as he eagerly learned how to make a business spreadsheet. In any ad after 1985 it was just a kid and his/her games. Parents were officially extinct.

WELL DODGY

Anyone would agree that despite Sega's 'Seal of Quality' and current strict licensing, software is a mixed bag. Very few games get Megagame status, but back then buyers were at the mercy of some real cowboys. Some of the stunts they tried to pull off were literally breathtaking:

* A company called Taskset, who produced otherwise reputable games, fanfared Cad Cam Warrior, an 'epic' game of 8000 screens for the humble C64. Strangely enough, all 8000 screens were eerily identical...

* Jaz was once sent three games from newcomers, 'Reelax Software', begging decent reviews because they'd sunk their life-savings into their new projects. However, 'Gertie The Goose' (possibly the worst game ever) and co duly earned an average of 9% each.

* Audiogenic decided to convert their abysmal C64 disk game, Alice in Videoland, to cassette. All fine and good, but the game was originally multi-load, and they didn't bothering altering it. Tape owners found to their dismay, that after they completed the first level, the rest of the game didn't load...

* One company tempted you to splash out in the most irresistible way. Cascade advertised their 'Cassette 50' game in every mag, in every issue. It promised 50 separate games — all of which were terrible and written in BASIC — on one C60 tape for £10, with a digital watch thrown in free! Alarmingly, we saw a company trying to resurrect the same idea for the Megadrive at last year's ECTS.



▲ **1984: No free gift. 1985: Free watch. 1986: Free car 1987: Free house.**

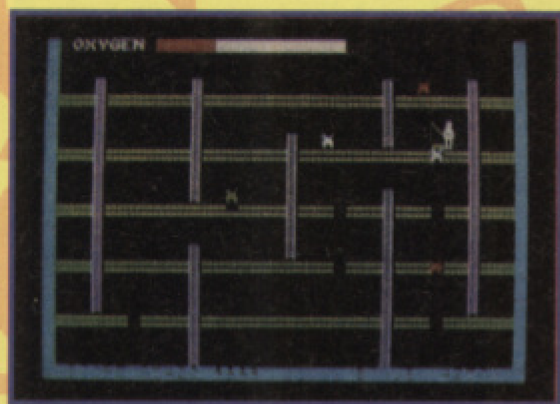


Eventually, the tabloid arm of the games market emerged. It seems strange to pass rusty water over Night Trap when Martech cheerfully touted 'Sam Fox's Strip Poker' to game buyers not yet old enough to smoke cigarettes. Alarmed? Well you might be if there had been anything to see, but the 'digitised' pictures were so grainy they were barely recognisable. Also up for a tasteless award° was Legend of the Amazon Women from US Gold, with female figures that made those of Dragon's Revenge look like nuns.

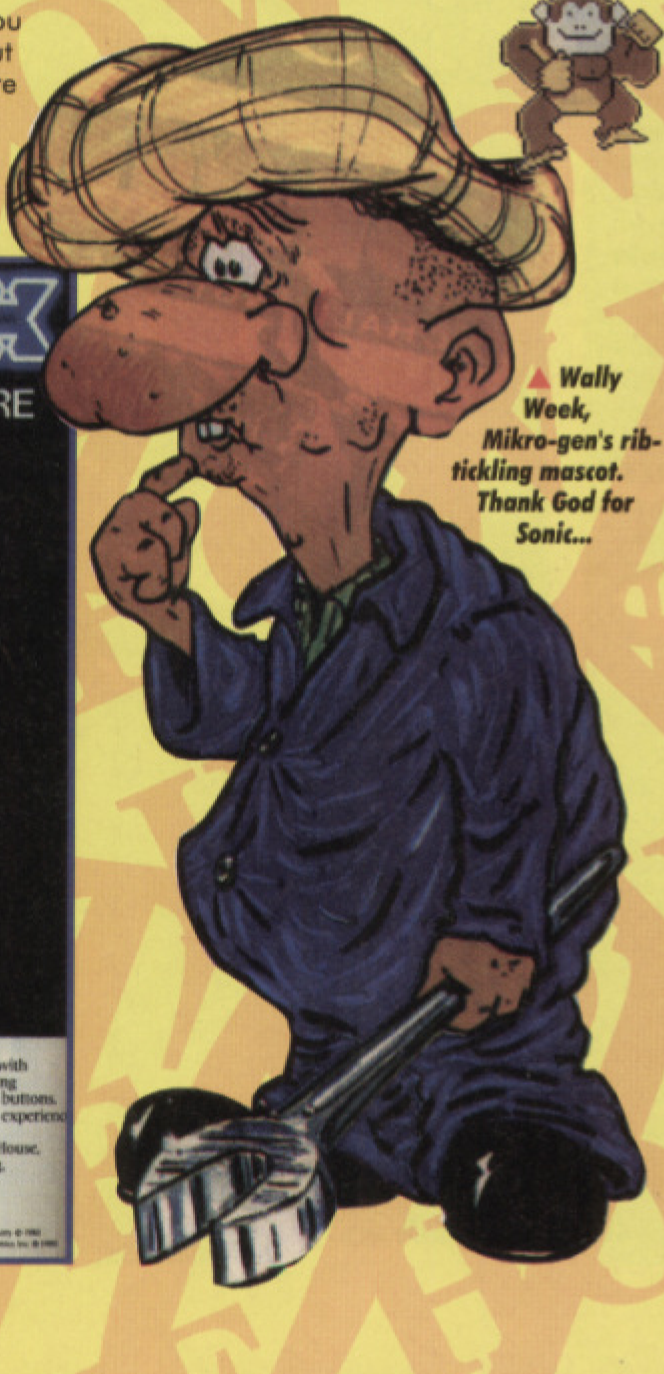


THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...

Of course, whilst there's no doubting hardware is getting more advanced, the way the computer industry actually works is pretty much the same. Look to the next generation of systems, for instance. In the next year or so we can expect attacks on our wallets from the 3DO, Project Reality, Saturn, Jaguar, and the new Sony machine. Of these, any one of them could prove to be the modern-day equivalent of the Jupiter Ace of Electron, whilst others will ensure that video-gaming moves into the year 2000. Any bets on what's going to be next year's Oric 1...



▲ *Space Panic. We once flicked 2p's up the return slot for free credits on a cross channel ferry...*



▲ *Wally Week, Mikro-gen's rib-tickling mascot. Thank God for Sonic...*

10 GAMES WHICH SHOULD BE CONVERTED TO CONSOLE

1. SHADOWFIRE - BEYOND
2. URIDIUM - HEWSON
3. PARADROID - HEWSON
4. THE EIDOLON - LUCASFILM
5. WIZBALL - SENSIBLE
6. ALIENS - ELECTRIC DREAMS
7. UNDERWURLDE - ULTIMATE
8. FORBIDDEN FOREST - COSMI
9. HEAD OVER HEELS - OCEAN
10. HEAVY ON THE MAGICK - GARGOYLE



10 PAST HORRORS

1. WORLD CUP CARNIVAL - US GOLD
2. KNIGHT RIDER - OCEAN
3. BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA - ACTIVISION
4. FRIDAY THE 13TH - DOMARK
5. IMHOTEP - ULTIMATE
6. VALHALLA - LEGEND
7. PI-EYED - AUTOMATA
8. CHINESE JUGGLER - OCEAN
9. THE GREAT SPACE RACE - LEGEND
10. ANYTHING FROM 'THE QUILL' - GILSOFT

PREVIEWS

So

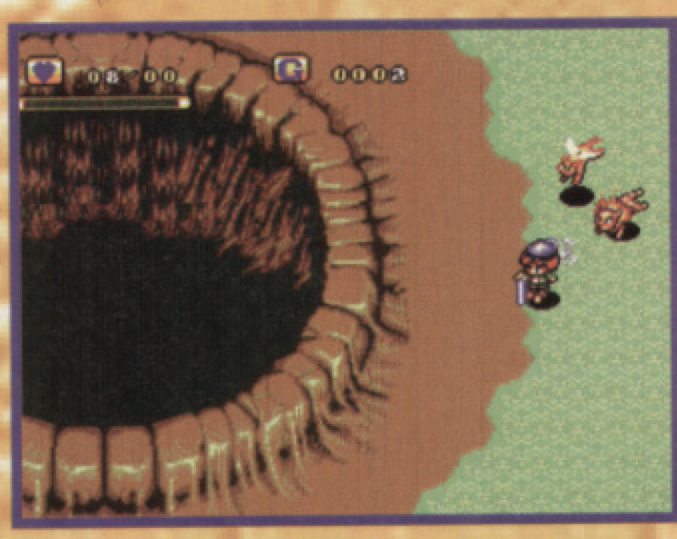
With Chuck Rally out to rival Mario Kart, Sonic out-doing Mario in the platform world, and Virtua Racing set to wipe the floor with Nintendo's much-vaunted Stunt Car FX, there's only one real reason for using the Super NES these days: Zelda III. It's clever mix of RPG and arcade sections has made it a true classic, and rightfully so. True, Sega have retaliated with both barrels by releasing Shining Force and the stunning Landstalker, but come winter this year they'll sink another massive nail in Zelda's coffin in the shape of Soleil.

Using an overhead view similar to that of the Nintendo game, but boasting much larger and more detailed sprites (which resemble those of Konami's Zombies), Soleil drops the player into the moccasins of an unlikely hero left to battle all manner of mutated critters as he scours the game's eight-way-scrolling play area. As the game is in the very early stages of development, the main reason for the sword-wielding hero's constant hacking and slashing fights has yet to be decided — although we'll lay good money on some kind of demon popping up to cause havoc in a once-peaceful land!

Although the game is at an extremely early stage in its development and the name is subject to change in the next few months, Soleil is looking rather impressive. Sega have proved themselves to be rather adept at combining arcade-style fight sequences with clever puzzles and huge play areas, and Soleil looks set to keep this trend going. More details will appear in MEAN MACHINES SEGA as soon as there's something to see.





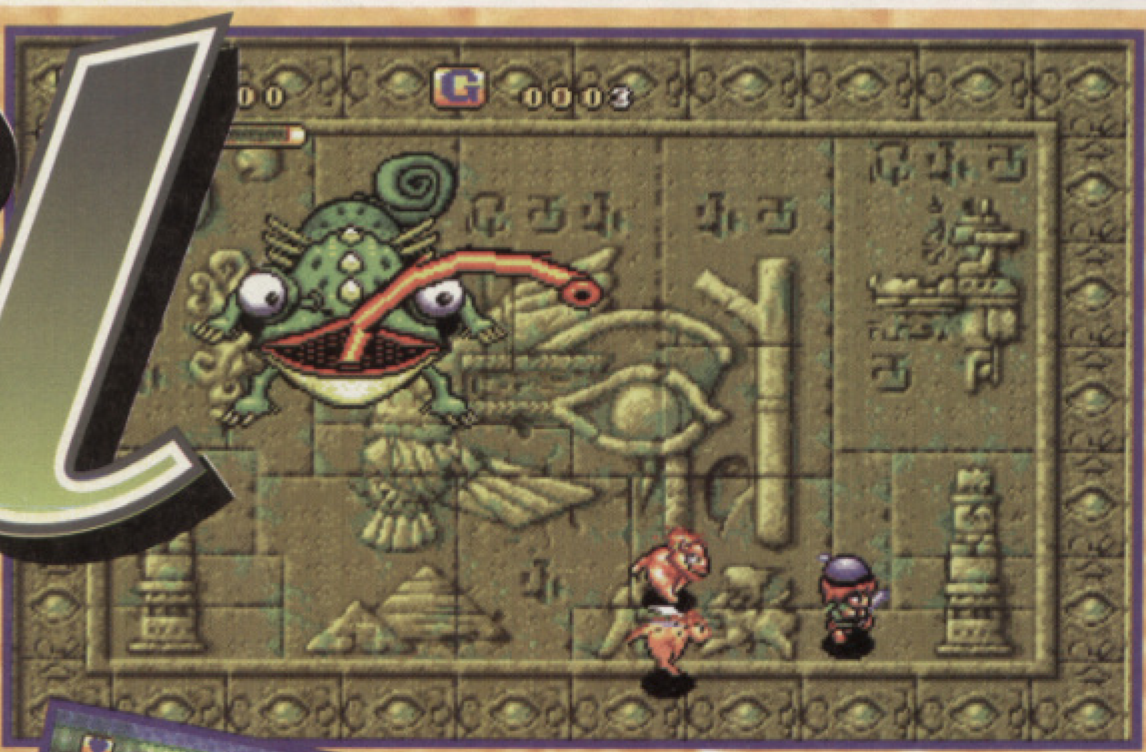


▲ *"Last one in the pool's a smelly egg..."*

FOE-N HOME

The game's gangly hero enters the assorted frays armed with just a sword to protect himself from vicious onslaughts from the game's plentiful foes. The creatures lining up for a scrap depend on the player's surroundings, with huge fire-breathing dragons lurking within a sprawling cave system, whilst huge mutant toads and hero-chomping fish are poised to snap up any unwary players should they need to cross one of the rivers within the game map. It certainly makes a change from the usual orcs and goblins!

leil









▲ "Gissus yer pocket money, or I give you a chinese burn", growled Masher Baines.





ALL NEW...

The basic aim of Soleil is to fight your way across the eight-way-scrolling map, building up your armaments for the final confrontation with the undetermined guy or gal responsible for the outbreak of mutants all over the shop. All the usual RPG ideas have been incorporated, including provisions and extra weaponry, but Sega have attempted to add a number of new ideas to the genre to keep it fresh. Hoorah for a bit of originality, that's what we say!



ANIMAL MAGIC

Ordinarily, RPGs such as Soleil see the player collecting magic potions and weapon power-ups as they progress through the game. This time, however, Sega have opted for a weirder, but equally interesting slant on the theme. Pressing an as-yet-undetermined button unveils an inventory full of — wait for it! — animals! Believe it or not, these act as ingredients for number of potions (I wonder what the RSPCA would say about that!), and specific combination of the lions, othersuch big cats and even dinosaurs go together to boost the hero's weaponry, endowing him with such luxuries as a fiery boomerang or a more powerful sword. Even better, though, it's not just limited to weaponry, and another combination create a large lizard for our hero to ride!

KART-OGRAPHY

Don't ask us why, but somewhere within Soleil's huge map, lurks a Go-Karting course! On stumbling across it, the hero immediately jumps into one of the available vehicles and the view switches to that of a Micro Machine-style racer! With the other vehicles driven by a series of meanies lifted from the main game, what follows is a rather bizarre series of laps with the main aim being to be first past the finishing post. Quite why this happens is anyone's guess, but we reckon it'll be a handy way to accrue extra money and food for your journey as prizes.





▲ As Jeanette shot off the back of the bike, little did Keith realise he'd lost his date on his way to the cinema.









1 PLAYERS	RELEASE	TBA
	BY	SEGA
16 MEG	PRICE	TBA
	GAME TYPE	ADVENTURE

PERCENT COMPLETE



In the past, we've had the Seiddabs, the Galaxians, and the Plaieds. Now, however, it is the Insectars' turn for galactic domination, as we enter Core's 3D world in search of action. Battlecorps is the latest CD title to emerge from their Derby HQ and is set on a series of mining planets in the year 2096. With Earth's resources now virtually nonexistent, the human race has gone into space to plunder other planets for the vital ores needed. As can be expected, mining has become big business, and the industry is now dominated by the Interplanetary Mining Corporation (IMC) and BioMechanical Incorporated. With the ore's value shooting through the roof, dirty tactics have come into play, and the Insectar race are the BioMech Corps' last-ditch attempt to wipe IMC out.

As a new member of IMC's security squad — the Battlecorps of the title — you and your heavily-armed Walker ship have been dropped into the Mandelbrot system where the latest wave of Insectar attacks are taking place. Mandelbrot is made up of five moons, each of which has a different climate. The first, Vegra, is a volcanic location where the mining bases are under attack from the Insectar ships, whilst later planets take place underwater and in a claustrophobic mine.

At the time of writing, Battlecorps exists as three playable levels, with the final two currently under development. Needless to say, though, MEAN MACHINES SEGA will bring you the exclusive review as soon as the game is complete.





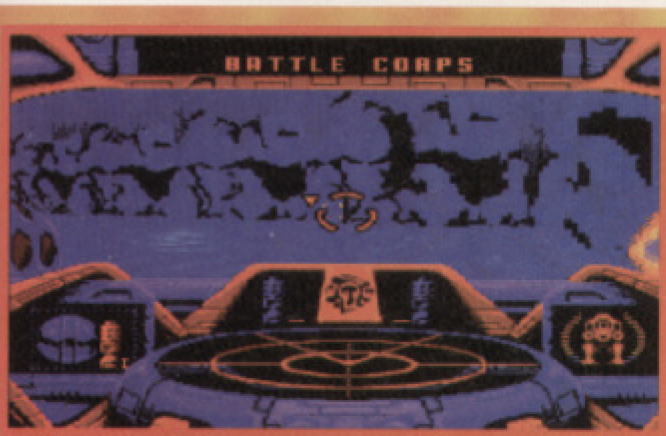
An Elite-type scanner maps the battlefield.

The voyage into the unknown.















WORLDS APART

The Mandelbrot system comprises five planets, each of which contains essential ores the IMC need. Vegra is the first planet you'll encounter and is a series of small islands surrounded by boiling lava pits. The next stop is Cygni which has an aquatic theme, whilst Drako is a subterranean affair made up of a series of tunnels. Originally, Drako was going to be another volcanic planet with hurricane-style winds blowing you off course, but this was dropped mid-development. Finally, the tour ends with a quick trip to Caliban, the ice world, and Moebius which is the furthest away from the Mandelbrot sun and, consequently, very dark.



◄ *Battleshields provide protection that keep you fresh and confident.*

ROY WALKER

The walker under your control is a massive beast which is controlled via the joypad. The A button and the D-pad are used to get it moving, but the D-pad alone allows the player to rotate the top half of the machine to turn and shoot any oncoming Insectar ships — and pressing the A button Again will snap the legs round so you can continue in the direction you're currently facing! This then leaves the B and C buttons which are used to control the walker's weaponry system. Initially, these are just a couple of chainguns, but collecting power-ups upgrades them to mining lasers and missiles.







▲ *One light, shining in the darkness.*



1 PLAYER	
RELEASE	JULY
BY	CORE DESIGN
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	SHOOTING

PERCENT COMPLETE

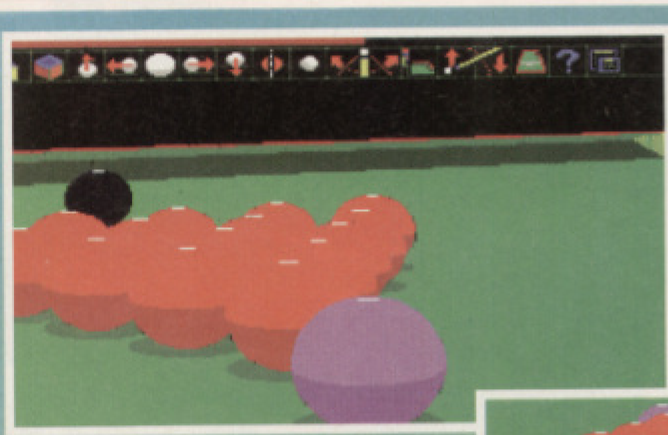
JIMMY WHITE'S WIRLWIND SNOOKER

Despite the image purported by Big Break, there's more to Snooker than potting as many balls as you can in a minute and dressing up as a Pantomime Dame at Christmas. Instead, it's a game of skill and accuracy — a feeling Virgin are hoping to convey in their forthcoming Megadrive conversion of Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker.

In its original Amiga form, Snooker won a legion of fans thanks to its unique viewpoint and control system. You see, whereas past games gave a bird's-eye view of the proceedings, Whirlwind Snooker allows the player to view the action from virtually any angle — including a scrolling view from the moving white!

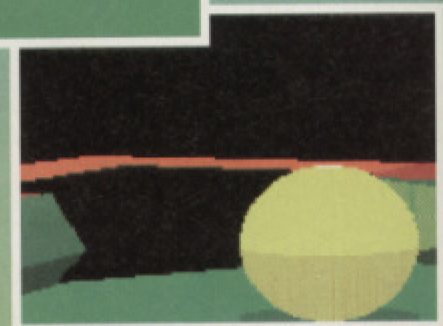
The key to Snooker's versatility is the icon system used to control the game. Located at either the side or the top of the screen (you decide), a simple point 'n' click system allows the player to zoom in and out of the table, chalk the cue, or raise the angle of the shot. Similarly, when the cue has been lined up, both the shot strength and the amount of spin the player deem necessary can be added via a secondary icon set.

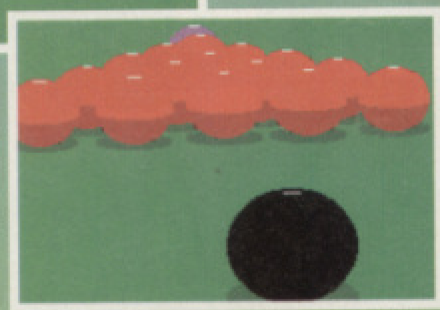
So far, Whirlwind Snooker is roughly 70% complete. Most of the ball collision plotting routines are up and running, as are basics such as the cue graphics and zoom features. However, the balls still behave a little erratically at times, and this is being sorted, whilst a series of bonus trick shots are also under development. Expect a full review in a Snooker-loopy MEAN MACHINES SEGA real soon.

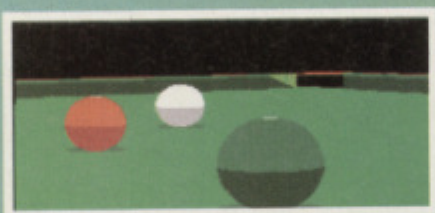




▼ *All of a sudden, Pinky felt as if he was being watched. Sure enough, the Red Gang had snuck up on him...*



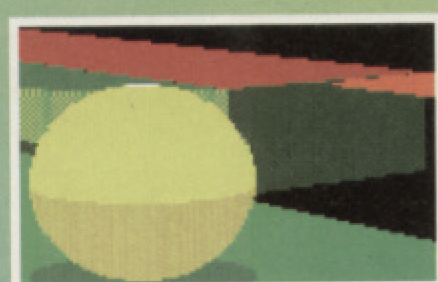


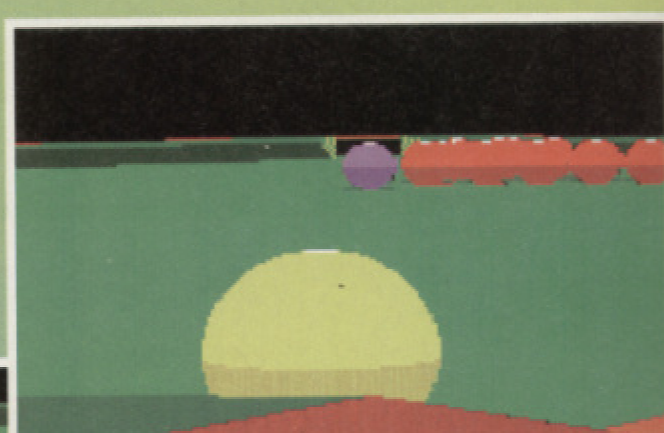


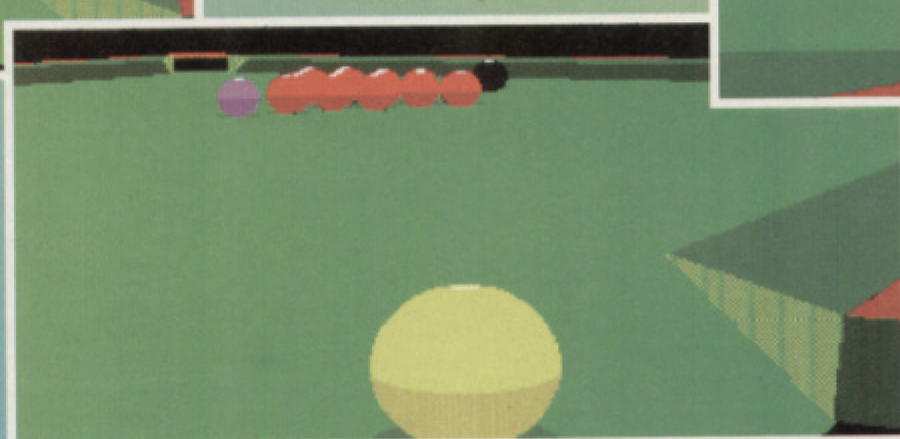
▲ *Ralph was scared of what perils awaited in the dark hole.*

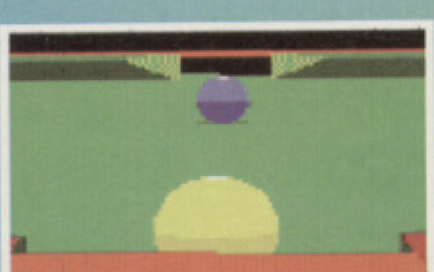


▲ *Mr Happy awoke to find some sod had nicked his limbs...*





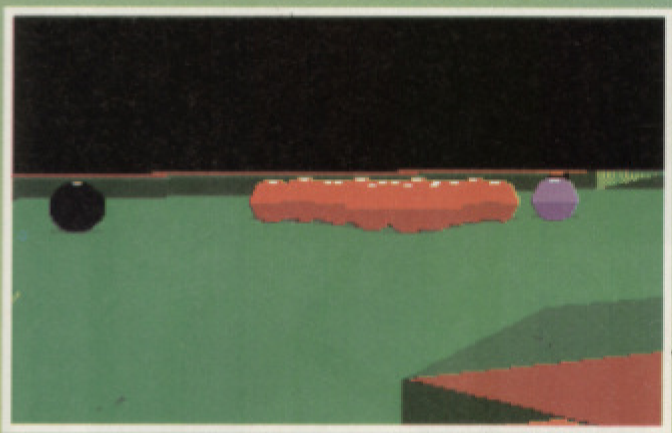




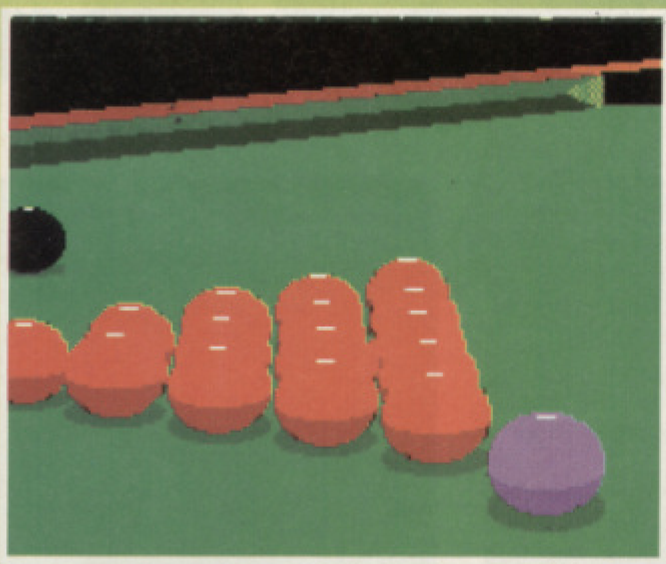


SNOOKER LOOPY

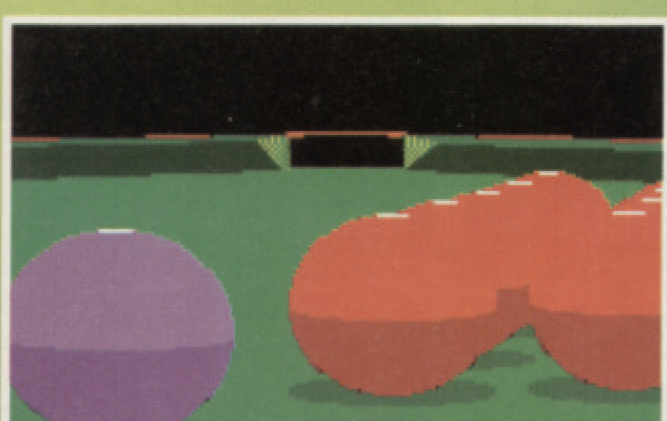
Programming veteran, Archer Maclean, is the guy behind the Amiga version of Snooker and the Megadrive conversion. Archer's programming career took off in 1983 when his classic blaster, Dropzone, was released on the unsuspecting C64 and Atari markets. A 'tribute' to both Defender and Stargate, Dropzone won him instant acclaim, and its longevity is such that Codemasters are planning Game Gear and Master System versions for later this year, whilst rumour has it that Psygnosis hold the Megadrive rights. Following this, Archer then went on to write International Karate and IK+ for System 3, before swotting up on the Amiga and ST to put together the original version of Snooker for Virgin.

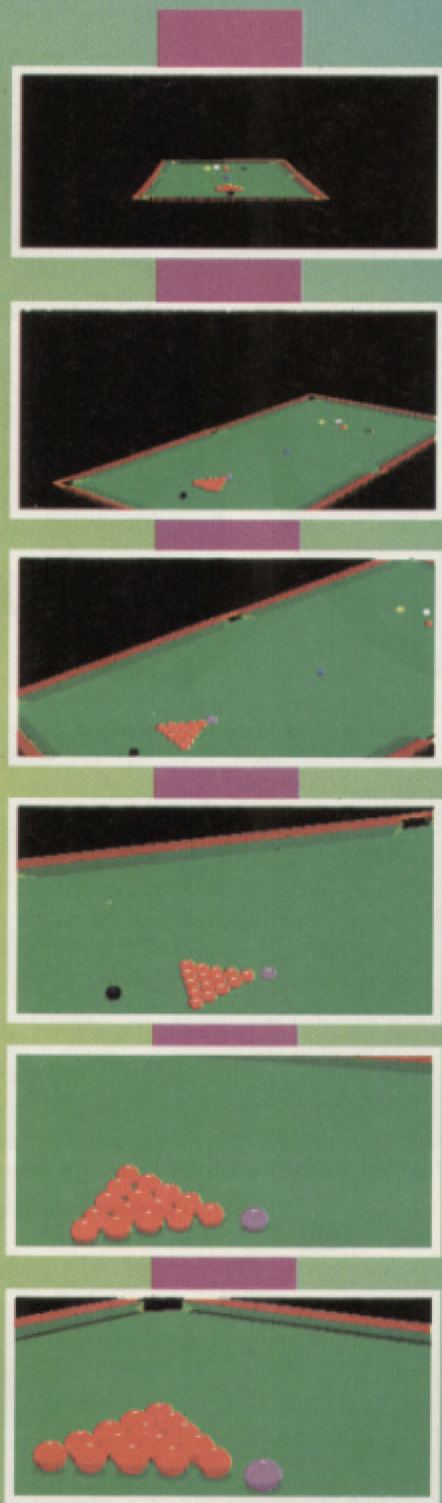


▲ *Unseen by the pack of Gazelle-like Reds, the Black prepared to pounce on his lunch.*

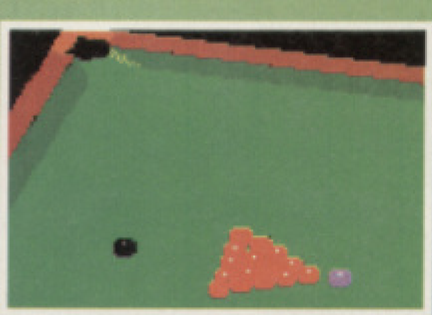


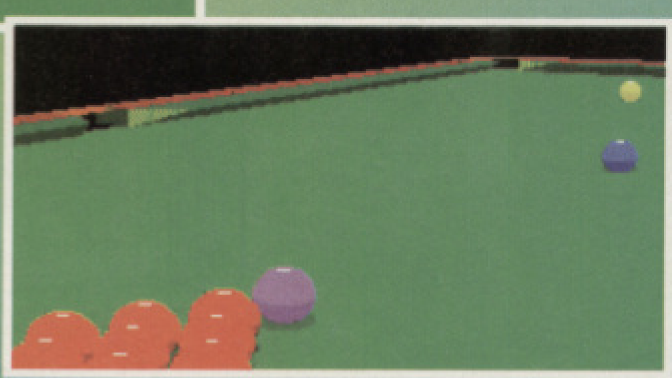
▲ *'Aha!', Declared Professor Pink, 'my cloning worked!'*





▲ *An example of the Megadrive's scrolling power. Discuss.*

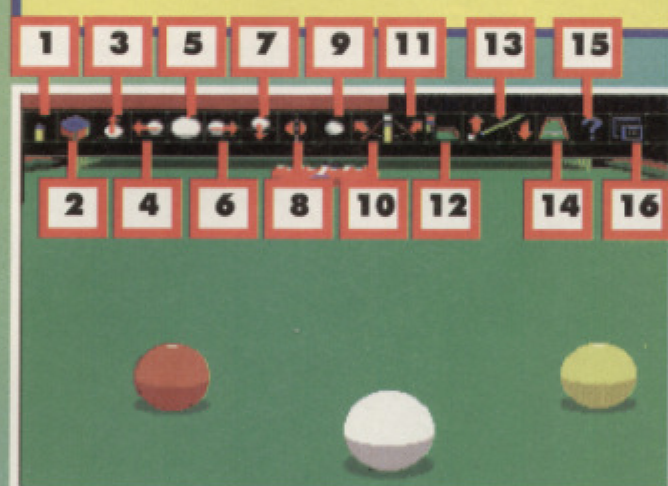




ICON DO THAT

Surprisingly, complete control over every aspect of Snooker comes via these fifteen icons. Here's a brief guide to complete ball control:

1. Take Shot: Once everything has been lined up, this puts all your hard work into action.
2. Chalk Cue: Shots requiring a lot of spin need loads of chalk.
3. Top Spin: Aims the cue to the top of the white ball, shots using this sees the white roll after the target ball.
4. Left Spin: Careful use of this allows the player to curl a shot around an obstructing colour.
5. Spin Icon: A small dot on this icon indicates where your cue will strike the white.
6. Right Spin: The same as the left... except to the right, that is.
7. Bottom Spin: Striking the white at its bottom produces a shot which will bounce back from the target ball.
8. Guide Line: Essential for shots which require a double from the cushion, this allows the player to plot the angle of deflection.
9. Return To White: When you've finished scanning the table, this returns you to the view behind the white.
10/11. Pan Shot: Pan across the table to change the angle of the shot.
12. Bird's-Eye View: Simply view the action — and any long shots — from afar.
13. Raise/Lower Cue Angle: If the white is directly next to a colour, an acute angle is needed to position the cue over the blocking colour. It's rather like those trembly hand shots you see on the telly.
14. Another View: Well, it is. This time from the bottom of the table.
15. Options: Change a few things to your liking.
16. Stats: Who's winning, basically...



1-2 PLAYERS

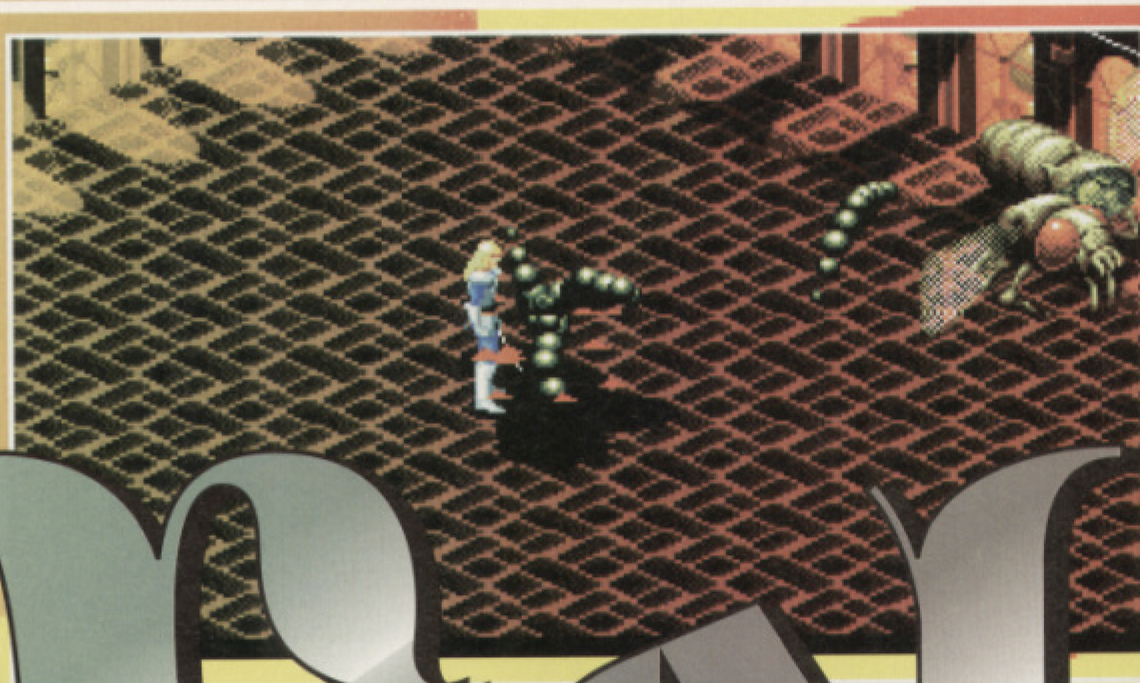
4 MEG

RELEASE	TBA
BY	VIRGIN
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	SPORTS

PERCENT COMPLETE

Rel

The guys at Treasure have gone into game overload, as they unveil their rival to Landstalker's crown. Currently using the name Relayer, the game is set in the distant age of wizards and warlocks, with the strapping hero sprite out to avenge his townsfolk who have been wiped out by an evil dragon. Escaping the main assault by crawling through a tunnel system, the blonde-haired avenger vows to battle through whatever is thrown in his way to slay the oversized lizard — and this means tackling sixteen huge levels, each of which is stuffed to the gills with puzzles and deadly foes.







The game is played across a series of scrolling isometric screens, and the action is a mix of sword-wielding action and the aforementioned puzzling. The dragon's cronies include the usual orcs and insects, but others to keep an eye out for include some impressive-looking ghouls and reptiles. Similarly, the puzzles are complex affairs which span several rooms and may require the collection of specific objects of a series of moves performed in the right order.

As of the time of writing, very little of the game exists, but what is apparent is that fans of Landstalker should keep an eye on Relayer. MEAN MACHINES certainly will be, and we'll bring you further details as they become available.



The Mediaeval equivalent of a revolving door.



1 PLAYERS	RELEASE	AUTUMN
	BY	TREASURE
16 MEG	PRICE	TBA
	GAME TYPE	ADVENTURE

PERCENT COMPLETE

HOCUS-POCUS

An RPG without spells would be like a Hedgehog without spines or a cat without the habit of licking its bum. To begin with, our hero is armed with his sword and nowt else. However, by slicing up a few of the bad guys he meets, he'll find they leave potions behind as they kick the bucket. These offer the usual extras such as replenishing lost energy and temporary invincibility, but combining them creates even more impressive results — earthquake spells, for instance! — so getting your chemistry degree is essential.







▲ *Taking a swipe at one of those dungeon denizens.*



▲ *Some of the puzzles look very intriguing.*



Always be polite to wizards riding dragons.

LUVVERLY GRUB

Some of the larger foes prove to be veritable goldmines of potions and power-ups. Somewhere within the second stage, for example, lurks a huge, pregnant fly. Slashing this slices its belly open, releasing dozens of little grubs. Take time out to kill these, and goodies galore are yours for the taking! Also, it's worth noting that each foe can withstand a number of hits, with the amount increasing as the game progresses. However, perseverance reaps rewards, and the more resilient foes normally relinquish better power-ups when killed.

I GET BY WITH...

Although the main sprite is the sole survivor of the attack, there are a number of helpful devices left to aid his cause. Disembodied heads float around offering advice for the trickier puzzles, and inscribed discs act as 'save game' devices — essential in a game like this. Finally, always keep an eye out for fountains as the water within them replenishes any lost energy.





1 PLAYER	
16 MEG	
RELEASE	JULY
BY	TENGEN
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	SPORT
PERCENT COMPLETE	

R.B.I. BASEBALL

In what has become something of an institution to the American gaming fraternity, Tengen are currently lining up RBI '94 — their fifth Baseball game in as many years. What's more, they're also predicting that Baseball is set to knock Basketball from its 'top sport' throne — with the Olympic committee expected to include the sport in the Olympic Games some time this year — and are readying the game for a July UK release to coincide with the push.

In terms of appearance, RBI '94 doesn't look that different from its predecessors, but Tengen have tightened up the animation, added all the latest stats from some 700 players, and made the game slightly more user-friendly than in the past. This means that if the likes of Hardball III and RBI '93 have scared you off because it seemed nigh-on impossible to hit the ball, Tengen have added a pitching machine for practice purposes. Another new feature is a 'make or break' game, where the player is dropped into a pre-played game at a vital point and must hit a home run to win the game or catch your opponent's last batsman out. It's a bit like all those gooey American films, where little Joey hits a home run and is instantly liked and gets all the girls. Except better.

RBI Baseball '94 swings in for review next month, so stay tuned to see if it deserves a home run or to be struck out.

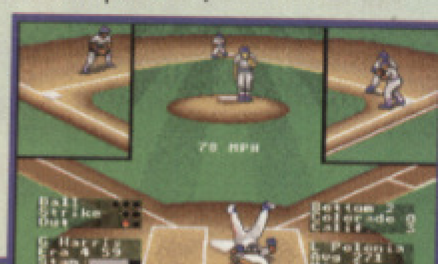






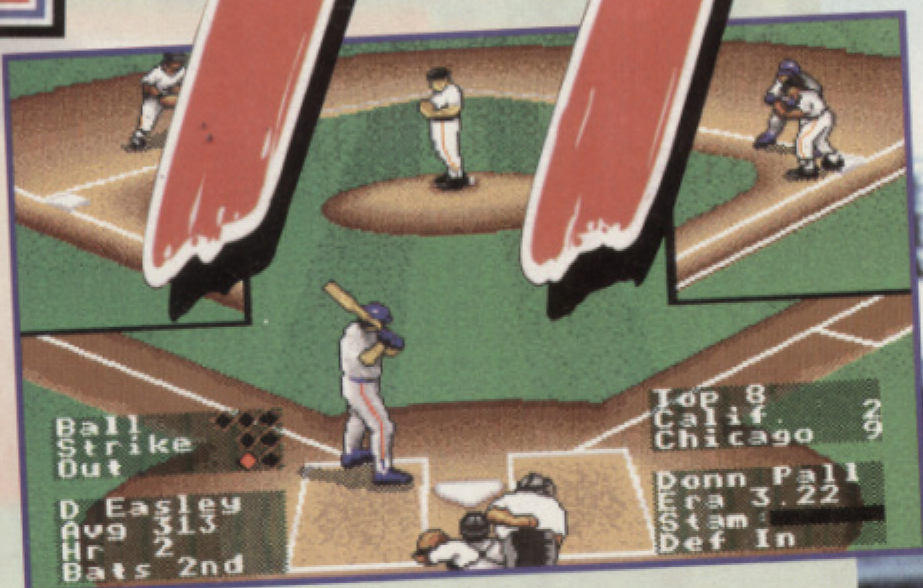
READY TO PLAY? WHAT'S THE DAY?

RBI '94 uses the almost customary 'behind batter' viewpoint, with the pitcher in the background. Tengen have made both pitching and batting slightly easier than before, with the A button and the joypad controlling the height, strength and spin given to each throw, whilst the three buttons allow the batter to swing, bunt or block. In addition, fielding shouldn't be quite so tedious as in past Baseball efforts either, as it can be left to the computer if you can't be bothered.





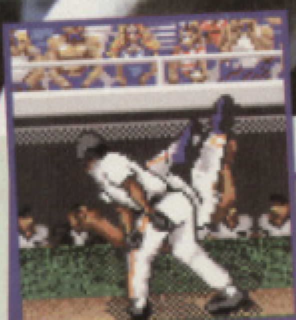




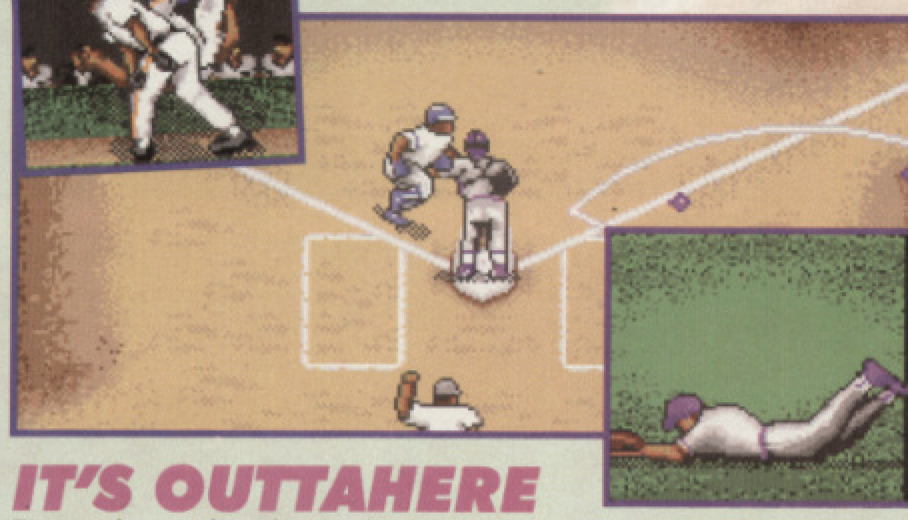
ON A SCREEN NEAR YOU

In the top corners of the batting/pitching screen lurk two TV screens which allow the player to keep an eye on every part of the game. When pitching, a coach appears offering advice via a series of weird hand signals, and it also acts a useful way o keep an eye on the bases. Even more amusing, though, is that it shows the crowd fighting each other or fielders knocking seven barrels out of each other in the rare event of a batter being KO'd by a fast ball! Not that we want to promote violence or nuffink.





▼ *Could you direct me to the nearest toilet please?*



IT'S OUTTAHERE

Tengen have taken the opportunity to add a few quirks to the game. With players stunned by the ball and fight scenes galore, the programmers have also taken note of Babe Ruth's home run skills and added a rather smart interlude screen. If a player smacks a ball right out of the park, the screen follows it until it lands — into the surrounding gasworks, water factory, etc!

They say where there's life there's hope. Well, whilst the England team sit at home and watch the Irish battle against the likes of Italy and Mexico in their forthcoming World Cup matches, the nearest ol' Blighty are going to get to lifting the trophy comes courtesy of US Gold's 8-Meg licence. Yep, not only can you play as the teams who actually made it to the finals in America, US Gold have also taken the liberty of adding a handful of surplus teams — including Terry Venables' bunch



WorldCu

As befits a World Cup licence, US Gold are aiming to make their game the most comprehensive sim available. As such they've included options which allow the player to adapt virtually every aspect of the game, whilst the match itself is viewed from the almost customary overhead viewpoint, with the pitch scrolling to keep up with the action — a system they felt worked best in past games. In terms of comparison, World Cup's players are considerably larger than those of Sensi, and developers, Tiertex, have taken a look at the many footy games available and tried to add as many new features as possible. Thus, the players can backheel the ball and chest it down in addition to the usual bicycle shots and banana shots.

So far, virtually everything USG were hoping to include has been incorporated into the game, and all that remains is to tweak the game to ensure it flows smoothly. How it compares to the likes of FIFA and Sensi will be revealed next month, when MEAN MACHINES SEGA pulls on its boots in order to restore a little respect for the English game...





TACTICAL PLAY

Before the matches begin, World Cup unveils a series of options screens which invites the player to tinker with every aspect of the game. All the usual weather and pitch condition features are there (which is a bit strange, as most of the US stadiums being used in the competition are under cover and use astro-turf!), and smaller items, such as the backpass rule, can be selected at leisure. One of the more important options, though, allows the player to predetermine their side's style of play. Thus, using a series of icon-based diagrams, complex set-pieces can be decided, and the computer-controlled players in your side will then automatically get into position for the move.

BOXING CLEVER

In an attempt to add a little variety to the matches, Tiertex have added a series of animations to brighten things up. Basically, these appear in a small box to the bottom-left of the screen, and either show the ref making a decision, or the crowd's reaction to the ons-creen action. Similarly, should one of your team be sent off, a picture will appear showing the disgraced player hanging his head in shame.

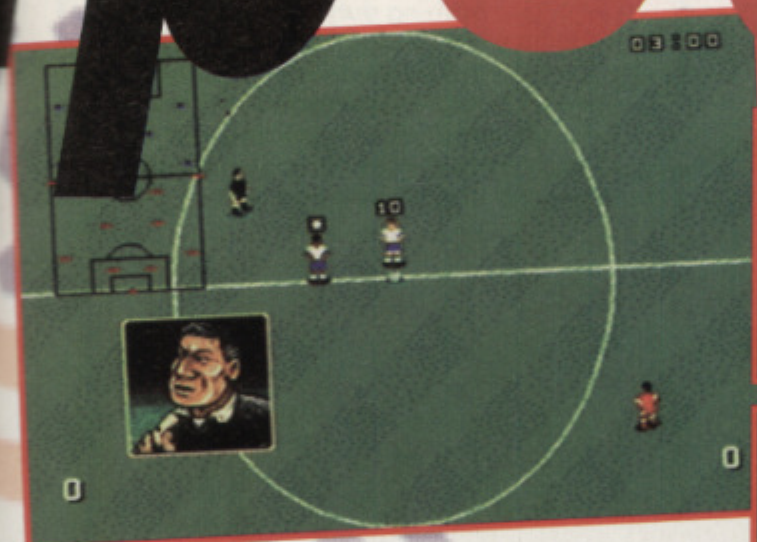


▲ *All the heart-rending drama of the penalty shoot-out.*

1-4 PLAYERS	RELEASE	APRIL
	BY	US GOLD
	PRICE	TBA

PERCENT COMPLETE

USA94

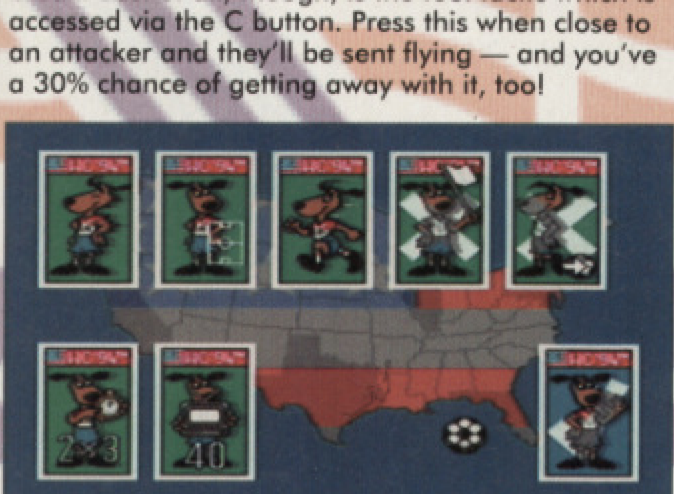






HACK 'EM DAHN!

The joypad's three buttons are used to effect the many moves on offer. Depending on the ball's height and proximity to the player, the A button is used for shooting and long balls, and may result in an acrobatic bicycle kick or a turning volley. Similarly, the B button is used to pass the ball to the nearest player whilst in possession or to attempt a tackle or block a shot if your opponent makes a break. Best of all, though, is the foul tactic which is accessed via the C button. Press this when close to an attacker and they'll be sent flying — and you've a 30% chance of getting away with it, too!





1-2 PLAYERS	
2 MEG	
RELEASE	SEOPTEMBER
BY	VIRGIN
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	BEAT 'EM UP

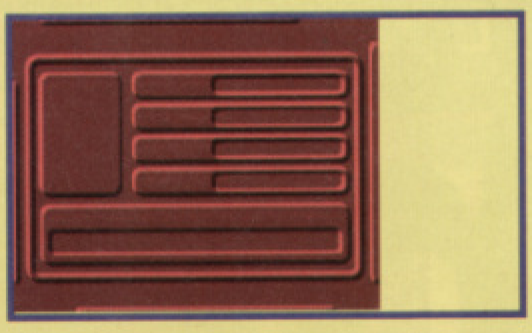
PERCENT COMPLETE

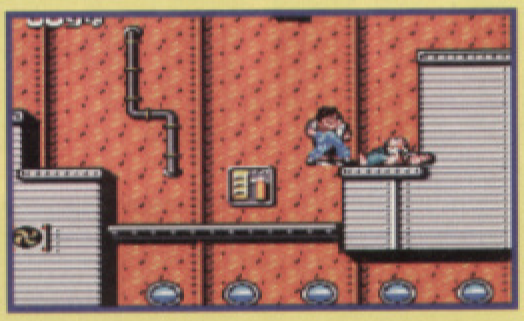
DRAG

Martial arts ace, Bruce Lee may be dead, but he sure ain't forgotten. His story was recently immortalised in the film Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story which followed his journey from Hong Kong to America, and his consequent journey to super-stardom until his life was tragically cut short at the tender age of 32 by a mystery brain-related malady. Some months ago we exclusively revealed details of Virgin's eponymous Megadrive conversion (not as yet released). Well now it's the Master System's turn to host some Martial arts-related antics and, quelle surprise, MEAN MACHINES got it first.

Unlike the Megadrive version which goes for a Streetfighter-esque one-on-one beat 'em up style, the Master System programmers have opted for a horizontally-scrolling type affair, a la Streets of Rage. You play Brucie-boy who's equipped with a juicy series of kicks, jumps, super jumps, punches and special moves whilst he roams around the scrolling landscape ready to bash the holy hell out of all and sundry.

The game's not actually out until September but feast your eyes on these EXCLUSIVE screenshots and keep your eyes peeled for a full review coming soon...





WHERE IT'S AT

Each level is split into three sub-stages with each backdrop supposedly lifted from a key point in the film. Starting off in the kitchens, the action moves onto the ice cellar (which looks intruigingly similar apart from the utterly realistic blocks of ice scattered here and there). At the end of the last sub-stage you must muster all your martial skills to tackle the boss left on Bruce-bashing duty. These guys are big but you know the old saying — the bigger they are the harder they fall (although in our experience, the bigger they are, the harder the hit you)

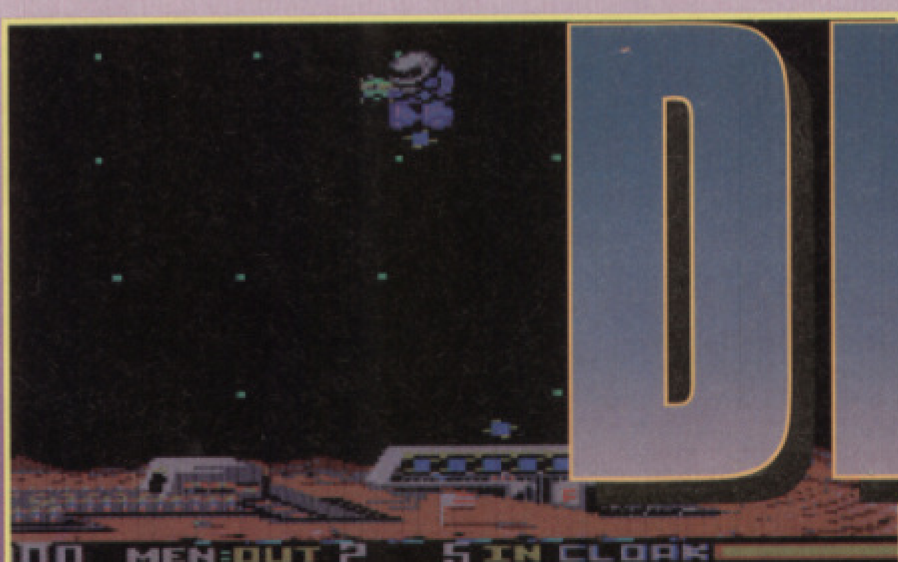
DRO

Ok, nostalgia freaks, stop stuffing your faces with Hovis, get out from down t'pit and listen up because that classic of yesteryear — Dropzone — is zooming onto a Master System and Game Gear near you courtesy of Codemasters.

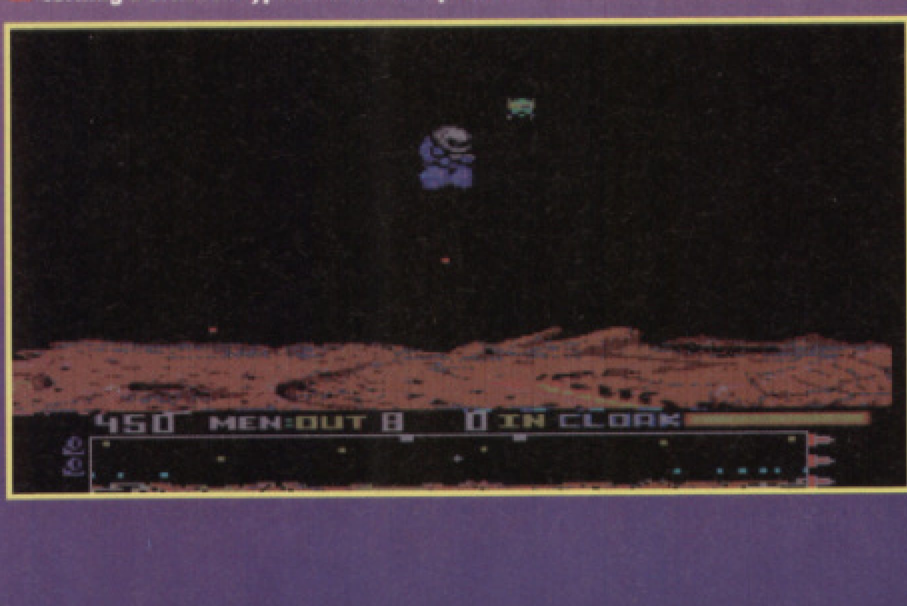
Just in case you've been closeted in a small, dark, black hole with a bag over your head for the past decade or so, we'll endeavour to fill you in on the scenario. You're this spaceman/superhero bloke, and you fly around and rescue peeps and chuck 'em in a hole and shoot things. And... well, that's it really. But, wow, is it fun!

Created for the Commodore 64 back in the depths of time (well, the early eighties anyway), Dropzone was the original source of the phrase "they don't make them like they used to" (and other sad, crumbly-associated sayings).

When we first had a play about on the Master System version many moons ago, the graphics were pretty much the same as the original (ie pretty-crap-but-who-gives-a-damn) but Codemasters, in their wisdom have decided to give them a bit of a revamp. For better or for worse, who knows, but the good news is that all indications are that the original's immense speed and frantic playability have been retained — roll on a finished review copy, the results of which you will find in these hallowed pages very soon...



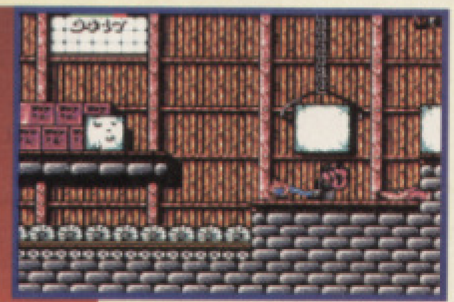
▲ *Corking Defender-type action in Dropzone.*



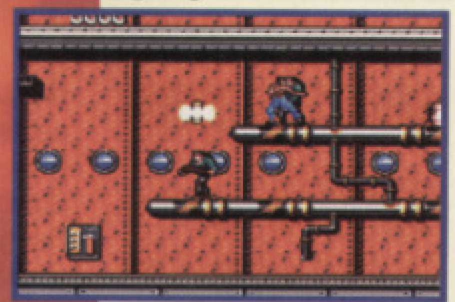


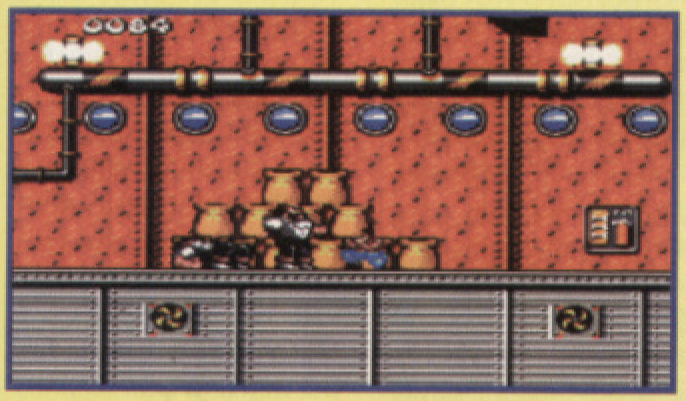
ON

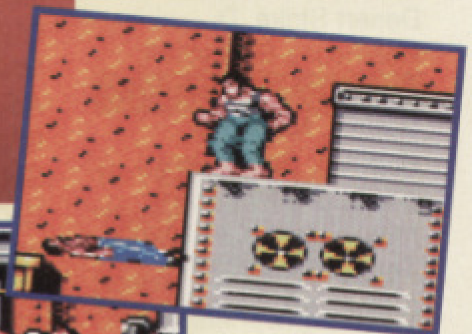




▲ *Everybody's kung-fu fighting.*

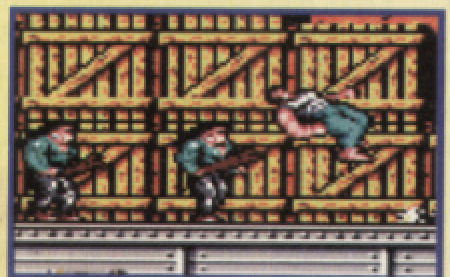


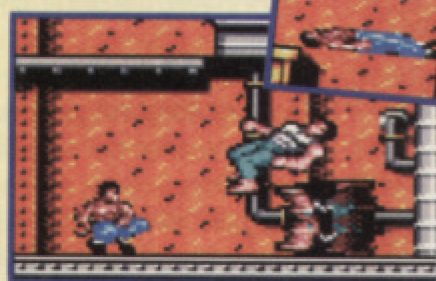




PICK ME UPS

Scattered around the landscape are a variety of power-ups such as pink hearts which boost Bruce's energy bar or oddities like bells and fires to improve his punching power. There are also a veritable selection of oil drums which can add force to your attack when you aim them at an approaching foe.



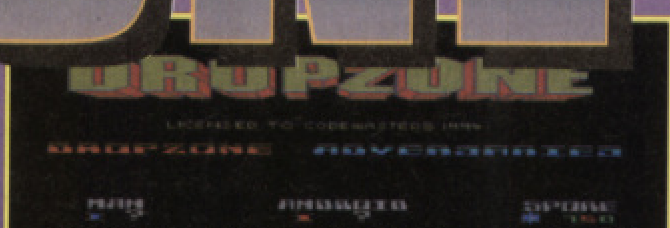


▲ *The blubbery bullies don't stand a chance.*

PZONE

1-2 PLAYERS	RELEASE	TBA
4 MEG	BY	CODEMASTERS
	PRICE	TBA
	GAME TYPE	SHOOT 'EM UP

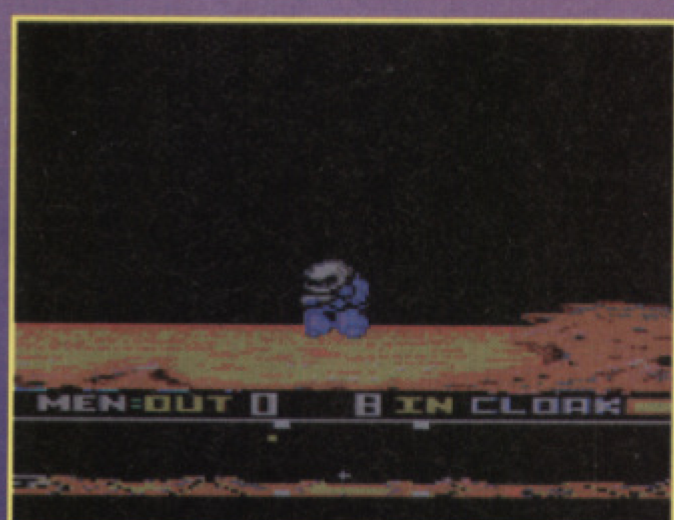
PERCENT COMPLETE



▲ *Faithful — right down to the points on the title screen.*







▲ *Dipping your toes in the lava pool.*

MEGAMART

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MEGADRIVE, 2 turbo pads, 12 carts, SF2, Flashback, Jungle Strike, EA Hockey '93. Alien 3, Desert Strike, D. Robinsons Basketball, Buck Rogers, California Games, Maddens, Populus, Sonic, very good condition, buyer must collect, £300 ovno. Tel. (0533) 760339 (Leicester), between 4.30pm-8pm.

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FOR SALE, Megadrive and back-up device and lots of Jap games, will split. Tel. Wayne on 091-565 8000.

MEGADRIVE for sale, 6 games, including Streetfighter, Sonic 2, Sonic 1, The Duell II, Dangerous Seed (including adaptor) and 3 control pads and only £125! also for sale, 18 MMS mags, 10 MD Advanced Gaming mags, 9 MegaTech mags & 10 Sega Pro mags. Tel. (0727) 846308, after 4pm weekdays.

MAGS, 5 'Mega' mags and 35 other Sega ones!! name your price! all offers considered, what a bargain! all free gifts with mags, inc. all in mint condition. Tel. David on (0727) 846308, after 4pm weekdays.

SEGA MASTER SYSTEM, 2 joypads (1 Megadrive), light gun, 10 games, Sonic 1&2, Speedball 2, Operation Wolf, good condition, £60 ono. Tel. (0272) 490674.

MEGADRIVE FOR SALE, 12 games, including SF II, Sonic II, Hellfire, World of Illusion, also 2 joypads, 6-button joypad and arcade powerstick, plus 17 issues of MMS, sell for just £230, worth over £700. Tel. Damien on 041-942 9566, if interested.

MEGADRIVE FOR SALE, 2 control pads, 8 games, titles include: FIFA International Football & John Maddens, price £150. Tel. (0463) 870090.

MASTER SYSTEM convertor for Megadrive, includes 7 games, only £50. Tel. (0400) 81168, after 6pm for details.

MEGADRIVE GAMES for sale, Decap Attack, Quackshot, Strider, Golden Axe, Alex Kidd, for details phone Peter on (0604) 847332.

NINTENDO Super Famicom (Scart) with 2 pads and 18 of the best games including: Contra, Axelay, Castlevania 4, SF II and Star Wing, all for £250, plus Phillips Scart monitor for only £80, everything is in stunning condition. Tel. (0753) 892441.

SNES GAMES for sale, Mortal Kombat, Barts Nightmare, SF2, Super SWIV, Ghouls 'n' Ghosts, Actraiser, Zelda, Another World and Action Replay (£25) all games boxed with instructions £20-£30. Tel. John on (0782) 279301, week nights (not Wed).

MEGADRIVE GAMES for sale: Mortal Kombt £30, Aladdin £30 or swap for Sonic Spinball. Tel. Paul on (0634) 365101 (evenings only).

MASTER SYSTEM for sale, plus Alex Kidd £20, plus Master System games £5-£20. Tel. Steve on (0782) 279301.

MAGS FOR SALE, I have over 50 of them, I might swap them for a good game. Tel. (0442) 825204.

MASTER SYSTEM II, Alex Kidd, games built-in, plus 15 games including Sonic 1&2, Mickey Mouse 1&2, Prince of Persia, Alien 3, New Zealand Story, all excellent condition, bargain £100. Tel. 081-840 7809 (Ealing, London).

SNES PAL VERSION, 12 games, convertor, 3 joysticks, Iremskins, Street Fighter II, Alien II, Super Starwars, Super Tennis, Super Mariocarts, Parodious Star Fox, Super Soccer, Super Ghouls 'n' Ghosts, Mario, Batman Returns £350, no offers, boxed. Tel. (0476) 77290, after 6pm, over 35 mags.

SNES FOR SALE with 2 controllers, convertor and 6 games, including Mario, All-Stars, Starwing, Streetfighter £195. Tel. (0756) 790508.

NEO-GEO, 2 games for sale or swap, boxed as new, will consider any swaps or offers. Tel. Paul on 021-328 9056, after 4pm.

MENACER with 6 game pack and T2 plus 2 sets of batteries, worth £110, sell for £50 ono, also Sega Pro 1-12 £12, 2 Crude Dudes £10, Quackshot £12, Populous £15. Tel. Andrew on (0621) 817914, after 6pm.

SNES with Mario, also Magic Sword, WWF, Sunset Riders, Mortal Kombat, Tennis, Warspeed and Probotector games £35, Computer and Mario £88, the lot £305, instructions for only Warspeed, Mortal Kombat, Sunset Riders and Magic Sword. Tel. (0457) 763003.

MEGADRIVE, mint condition, with 2 controls and 5 excellent games, boxed with instructions and leads, sell for £150 ono. Tel. (0457) 872168 (Manchester area).

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MEGADRIVE 2 + MEGA-CD 2, with Thunderhawk and Junglestrike also TechnoPlus joystick, all hardly used and worth about £430, selling at £300 ono. Tel. Alex on (0253) 592415 or leave message on machine.

MEGAMART

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SWAP absolutely/ nothing for your old or new carts, just send them to me and I will send nothing in return. Send to: 3 Pickwick Walk, Uxbridge Road, Hatch End, Pinner, Middx. HA5 4HS.

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CAN ANYONE help me finish Fantastic Dizzy on the Sega Megadrive? I have around 35 stars left to collect and it is frustrating me! Please wrtie to: W. Ennis, Haarlemmerweg 181 HS, 1051 LB, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

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NEXT MONTH

SIR ROBBIN' GIT (to be read in a crap bow tie): Welcome to Next Month Question Time, where we fill a page with... well, nothing at all, really. We are honoured today to welcome one of the most powerful and definitely the most unpopular man in Britain for an exclusive interview with me, Sir er,... um... [will someone please mend that flippin' autocue, ah that's better. Hurumph] ...Robbin' Git. Good afternoon, Mr Minor.

MR MINOR (to be read in Mr Bean voice): Big jobbies.

SIR ROBBIN' GIT: Mr Minor, can you confirm the rumour that the Turnip party is completely reneging on it's election promise to bring down the quality of MEAN MACHINES SEGA in line with other struggling magazines — a standard page, as it were?

MR MINOR: Eh, wazzat... Er yes, I mean no, I completely deny a definite maybe in view of the light of current economic erm, cake. Wibble wibble.

SIR ROBBIN': Does that mean yes?

MR MINOR: Oh alright then, guvnor, it's fair cop. I know we promised to make MEAN MACHINES as crap as all it's competitors so it would be fairer for the general public — I mean, it was hardly cricket that owners of inferior magazines could only get one MEAN MACHINES in real terms against 50,003 lesser publications on the exchange rate mechanism. But then we thought it through very carefully and decided "sod 'em". Ha ha ha, titter titter.

SIR ROBBIN': So you confirm that you were telling porkies?

MR MINOR: I strongly deny that momentous accusation and demand... [listens to earpiece] Oh, I mean yes.

SIR ROBBIN': Further evidence suggests that far from making MEAN MACHINES a bit pooey, you do, in fact intend to allow the staff to make it even better. Is this true?

MR MINOR: Yup! Since it is by far the best-selling Sega magazine — nay, console magazine — in the UK we thought we'd rub a bit of salt into the wounds of our opponents and make MEAN MACHINES bigger than them, better than them, get all the exclusives, be more useful, a better read and generally kick the stuffing out of them. So naaaaaaaaaah!

SIR ROBBIN': Finally Mr Minor, can you comment on what might be appearing in the next issue of MEAN MACHINES SEGA?

MR MINOR: Not a hope in hell.

SIR ROBBIN': Mr Minor, thank you.

MR MINOR: Bums.

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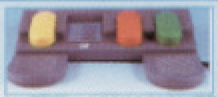
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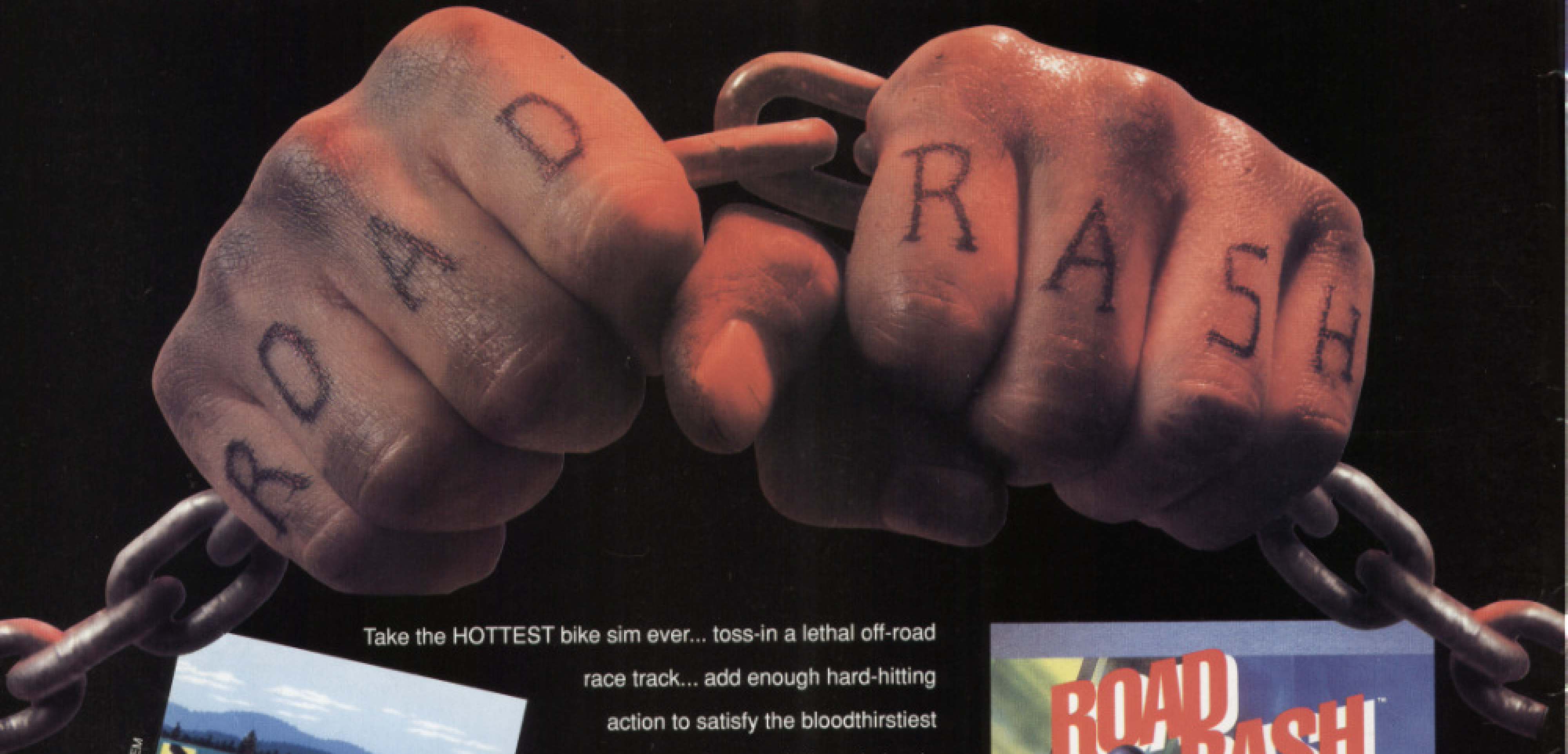
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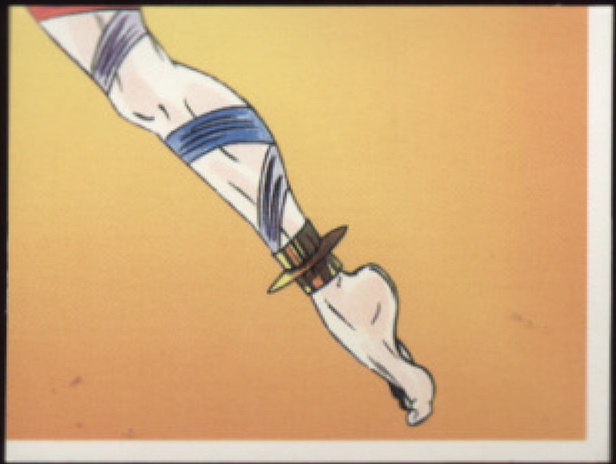
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